

THE ROMANCE OF  
BOOKSELLING





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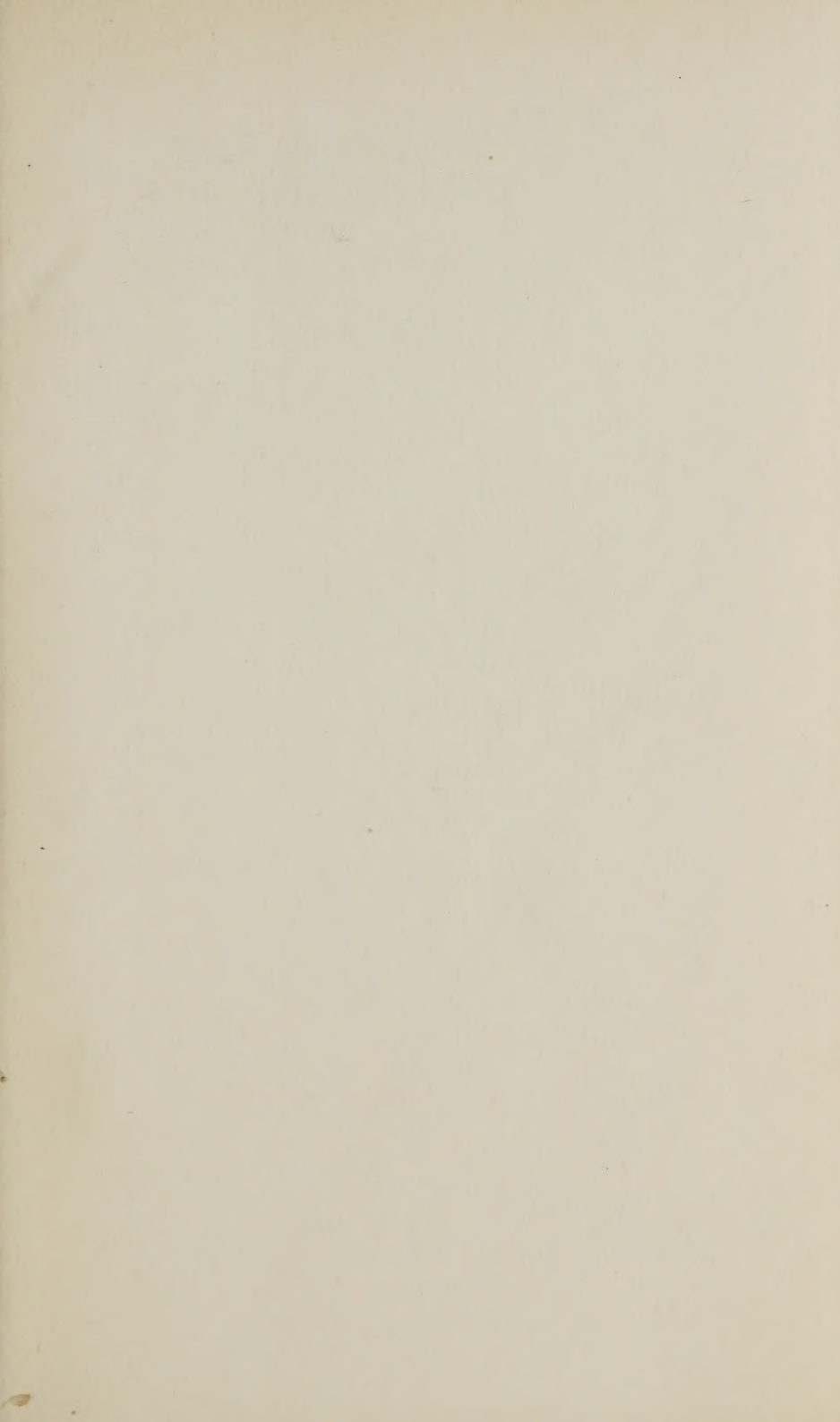






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THE ROMANCE  
OF BOOKSELLING









*Jacob Tonson*

THE ROMANCE OF BOOK  
SELLING: A HISTORY FROM  
THE EARLIEST TIMES TO  
THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

By FRANK A. MUMBY  
AUTHOR OF "THE GIRLHOOD  
OF QUEEN ELIZABETH" ETC.

WITH A BIBLIOGRAPHY BY W. H. FLEET

LONDON  
CHAPMAN & HALL LIMITED

1910



James T. T. T.



# THE ROMANCE OF BOOK SELLING : A HISTORY FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES TO THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

*By* FRANK A. MUMBY  
AUTHOR OF "THE GIRLHOOD  
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TO  
MR. & MRS. J. W. BROOKE





## PREFACE

MY reason for offering this work is that no one else has attempted to write an adequate history of English bookselling and publishing. Wherever I looked for information on the subject I was faced with regrets that so little had been done to explore this evaded field of research. "No great trade has an obscurer history," says Mr. Birrell in one of his "Selected Essays." "It seems to lie choked in mountains of dust which it would be suicidal to disturb. Men have lived from time to time of literary skill—Dr. Johnson was one of them—who had knowledge, extensive and peculiar, of the traditions and practices of 'the trade,' as it is proudly styled by its votaries; but nobody has ever thought it worth his while to make record of his knowledge, which perished with him, and is now irrecoverably lost." And I met the familiar saying of Carlyle—that "ten ordinary histories of kings and courtiers were well exchanged against the tenth part of one good History of Booksellers"—so many times that I was ashamed at last to face it again until I had done something to remove the reproach which seemed to lie hidden in his words, since I had myself undertaken a series of "Histories of Kings and Courtiers."

Curwen's "History of Booksellers," issued in 1873 and long since out of print, is not, strictly speaking, a history at all, consisting mainly of a collection of articles on the leading publishers and booksellers of his day. Much material lies scattered through Nichols's "Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century," and Charles Knight has made abundant use of this in his "Shadows of the Old Booksellers," a work which, though pleasantly written, is not always trustworthy. Mr. Edward Marston has also contributed some readable sketches of the eighteenth-century booksellers, between whom and the publishers of the twentieth century he regards himself,

## PREFACE

the *doyen* of the trade, as a sort of connecting-link. Mr. W. Roberts's "Earlier History of English Bookselling" is useful for its records of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, to which it is chiefly devoted; but the source-book of supreme value for the early history of the trade after the invention of printing is Professor Arber's great "Transcript of the Registers of the Stationers' Company," privately printed in five volumes, and carrying the record down to the year 1640. I am glad to seize this opportunity of thanking Professor Arber for his courtesy in permitting me to quote so freely from his monumental work. Of late years the scholarly researches of Mr. E. Gordon Duff, Mr. Henry R. Plomer, and other distinguished bibliographers have thrown a flood of light on the dim records of the Great Trade during the two centuries which followed Caxton's day, and my indebtedness to all these authorities has, I hope, been made sufficiently clear in the course of my narrative. Several extracts from Masson's "Life of Milton" are made by the kind permission of Messrs. Macmillan. I owe a word of thanks also to the well-known American publisher, Mr. George Haven Putnam, for some valuable references in his "Authors and their Public in Ancient Times," and other works.

In my own book an attempt has been made, for the first time, to tell the whole story of English bookselling with something approaching completeness—tracing its origin as far as possible in the classic days of ancient Rome; its struggle for existence through the Long Night of the Dark Ages; and its subsequent organisation and development through the centuries down to the present day. To have attempted more than an outline of this inexhaustible story within the compass of a single volume would have been courting the suicide's fate with which, it appears, I am already threatened by Mr. Birrell. For those who wish to probe deeper into the subject there is a ready and comprehensive guide in the excellent bibliography by Mr. W. H. Peet, published



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originally in "Notes and Queries," and now reprinted, with additions, by permission of the proprietor of that journal. Mr. Peet, whose knowledge of the inside history of the book trade is probably unique, has not only added his bibliography to my narrative, but has also assisted me with several portraits of bygone publishers, and rendered most effective help in the proofs. I am also indebted to the proprietors of the "Times" for permission to reprint the histories of the Oxford and Cambridge University Presses which I contributed to the pages of "Literature" before the days of the "'Times' Literary Supplement," and to incorporate in my narrative several articles from the same journal dealing with various aspects of the book trade, past and present. The remaining sketches of the great publishing houses of to-day are included by the kind permission of the proprietors of the "Daily Graphic," in whose columns they originally appeared.

I have, in addition, to acknowledge many courtesies in the matter of illustrations. Especially have I to thank the British Museum authorities for the fine examples of the clay books of Babylonia and Assyria, as well as for the reproduction of the illuminated frontispiece to the fifteenth-century manuscript in the Rothschild Collection representing Charles VIII. receiving the Exposition of the Apostles' Creed from Marc Picault, the author—one of the most beautiful examples of this kind of mediæval art that I have ever seen. To the Oxford University Press I am indebted for the fine illustration by Stradanus of "A Printing Office of about 1600," from Mr. Falconer Madan's "Brief Account" of the Clarendon Press; and to the Cambridge Press for the pictures of chained books at Hereford and Ghent, and the old print of a Roman bookshelf, from Mr. J. W. Clark's "Care of Books." Both Presses have also been good enough to supply the illustrations relating to their own eventful histories. To the Stationers' Company I owe not only the reproductions of its seal and arms, but the interesting picture of the Stationers' Barge, which used to play a conspicuous part in the picturesque days of the river pageants; to the Master Printers' Association I owe the sketch of "A Bit of Little Britain"; to Mr. H. Yates Thompson the portrait of Robert Dodsley, after the painting by Sir Joshua

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Reynolds, now in his possession, as well as to Mr. Ralph Straus, who reproduced the picture in his life of Dodsley; to the Treasurer of Guy's Hospital the portrait of Thomas Guy, the founder, after the painting by Vanderbank, now the property of the Governors of the hospital; to Messrs. Longmans the facsimile of the famous Macaulay cheque, and other illustrations; to Mr. John Murray the portrait of his grandfather, John Murray II., after the painting by H. W. Pickersgill, R.A.; to Messrs. Smith, Elder and Co. the portrait of the late George Smith, after the painting by G. F. Watts, R.A.; to Messrs. Hutchinson and Co. the photograph of Jacob Tonson, after the painting by Sir Godfrey Kneller, from which was made the photogravure frontispiece to the present volume; to Messrs. Bell the portrait of Henry George Bohn; to Messrs. A. and C. Black the portrait of Adam Black; to Mr. Bernard Quaritch the portrait of his father, the late Bernard Quaritch; to Messrs. Pitman the portrait of Tom Davies, from Mr. Roger Ingpen's illustrated edition of Boswell's "Johnson"; to Messrs. Kegan Paul the illustration of "A Scriptorium in 1456," from Mr. Falconer Madan's "Books in Manuscripts," as well as the portrait of Roger L'Estrange from Mr. Plomer's "Short History of English Printing"; to Mr. Hugh Allen the view of Sunnyside, Orpington, where his father, the late George Allen, first acted as Ruskin's publisher; and to Mr. Heinemann the portrait of George Wither and the title-page of the First Folio Shakespeare, from Garnett and Gosse's "Illustrated Record of English Literature." I cannot close without a special word of thanks to Mr. R. M. Leonard for many helpful suggestions throughout the reading of the proofs.

FRANK A. MUMBY

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## CHAPTER ONE : THE BEGINNINGS OF THE BOOK WORLD

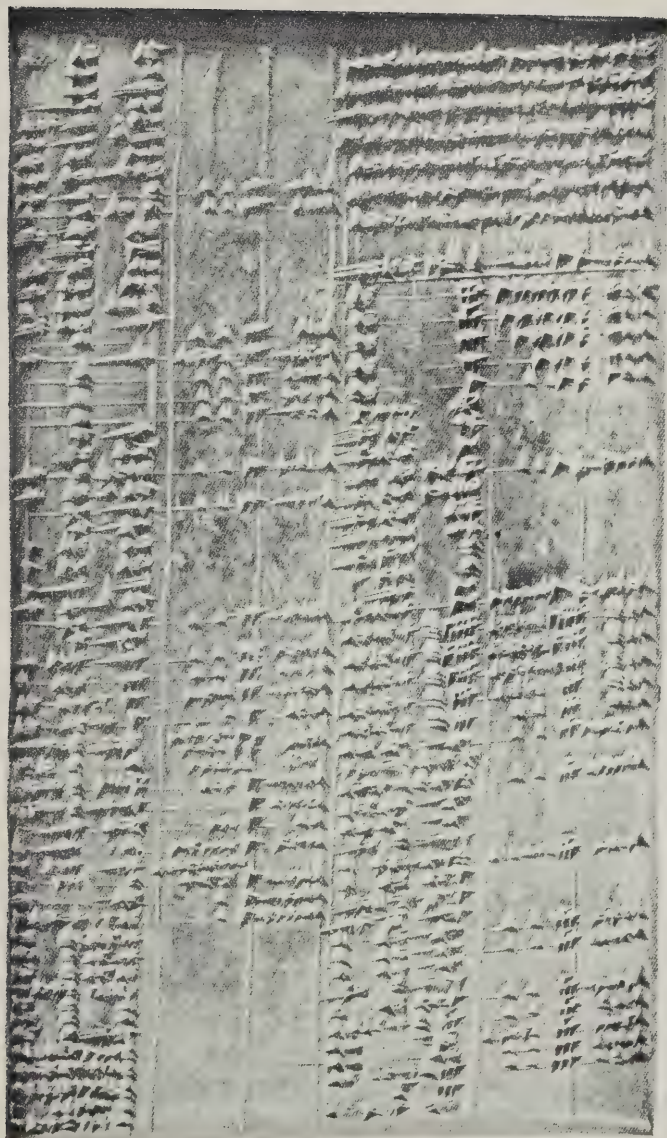
THE secret of the philosopher's stone is not more difficult to discover than the name of the Father of the Book Trade. We should look for it in vain among the records of the baked clay tablets of Babylonia and Assyria, and though a well-worn phrase in Ecclesiastes tells of the endless making of many books in Biblical days there is no mention in the Scriptures of any bookseller or publisher by name. The story that Barabbas was a publisher, erroneously attributed for many years to Lord Byron, who of all men had little reason to invent such a legend, has no more foundation in fact than "Peter Pindar's" epigram on the publishers' habit of drinking their wine out of authors' skulls. Both sayings may be attributed to the malignant humour which from time immemorial has been liable to break out among dissatisfied authors ; sometimes, we are bound to add, with a good deal of justification. In groping among the annals of antiquity it is a little disconcerting to find that the first bookseller about whom there appears to be any definite information was an undertaker as well. We had expected to discover the beginnings fostered by some ancient seat of learning, just as the modern book trade owed its early organisation largely to the universities. The undertaker's claim, however, need not be taken too seriously. He was an Egyptian, and his bookselling was only carried on in connexion with his funerals, at which he had the disposal of copies of the "Book of the Dead"—a work which was not only bought by the mourners and preserved by them as a memorial, but placed with the body in the tomb, to serve as the soul's passport and guide in the after-life. Leaving this lugubrious quasi-bookseller and flitting through the ages which saw the rise and fall of other ancient civilisations, we find an extensive literature of every description, even to novels, but no actual records



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of organised bookselling until we come to the classic days of the Greeks and Romans. Bookselling does not seem to have had any tangible existence as a trade in Greece until the fifth century B.C., and it did not grow to considerable dimensions until the reign of Alexander the Great, a century or so later. Authors sought no share in whatever profits it may have made. They would not insult their Muse by any sordid dealings with booksellers. Contemporary fame and perhaps the hope of posthumous glory were the only things that mattered to the authors of ancient Greece. Lucian, "the last great master of Attic eloquence and Attic wit," as Macaulay calls him, does not give a flattering picture, in his satire on "The Illiterate Bibliomaniac," either of the Athenian booksellers of his day or of some of their wealthy patrons.

"You think," he writes, "that by purchasing a great number of fine books you may be taken for a good scholar. But, on the contrary, you will only make your ignorance the more conspicuous. Not only do you buy the books which are not the best, but you are easily persuaded by the first man who praises the book; so that the booksellers who know you sacrifice to Mercury are as lucky as if they had found a treasure, for they could never hope for a better opportunity of converting their vilest trash into solid cash. . . . Even supposing that you were just discerning enough to buy the manuscripts of such a dealer as Callinus, so much admired for their elegance, or the publications of an Atticus, so celebrated on account of their accuracy, of what good, my dear sir, is such a possession to you? You can no more appreciate their excellence than a blind lover the fine eyes and rosy cheeks of a charming mistress. You may have collected the works of Demosthenes, including one of the eight copies of 'Thucydides' which he wrote with his own hand, or all the books which Sulla, when he made himself master of Athens, seized and sent to Italy, yet how could that avail you? If you made your bed on the best copies of the great authors, or were decked in manuscripts



BABYLONIAN SYLLABARY, OR SPELLING-  
BOOK, WRITTEN B.C. 442

*From the original in the British Museum*



## FROM ALEXANDRIA TO ROME

from head to foot, would you be less ignorant than you are? There is a proverb that says, 'An ape is still an ape though adorned with jewels and gold.' . . . You men of wealth would have too many advantages over us poor scoundrels if you could buy in an instant, for a mere sum of money, all the store of learning which has taken us so long to collect. If that were so no scholar would venture to contend in erudition with the booksellers, with the vast stores of learning in their possession; but, on closer inspection, you will find that these worthy persons are no less lacking in taste and discernment than yourself, though their days and nights as well are spent among books."

This, it must be remembered, was written in the declining days of the book trade in Athens, long after the conquest of Greece by the Romans had shifted the home of culture and the centre of literary life to Alexandria. Here, undoubtedly, was developed an extensive system of book-production, by means of which the best editions were published of the collected literature of Greece, Rome, Egypt, and India, based on the texts contained in the famous Alexandrian Library. Details of the trade itself, however, are sadly lacking, and of the men directly connected with it not a name is now known. We are forced, therefore, to turn to Rome, which subsequently became the chief seat of the book world, though the intellectual supremacy of the city of the Ptolemies was long maintained under the Romans. It was not until the second half of the first century A.D. that the centre of the publishing world passed to Rome itself, taking with it, according to Strabo, the groundwork of the system upon which the Alexandrian book trade had been built.

Once in the book market of ancient Rome we are on firmer ground; and there is much to remind us of the book world of to-day. We stand in the Argiletum, and the atmosphere of books is as strong as in our own Paternoster Row. The pillars outside the shops are covered with the titles of the works to be obtained within, and the whole place is evidently a favourite haunt of literary

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

men. The authors and scholars are plainly distinguishable from the slaves who go about their masters' business. If we look inside the larger publishers' offices we shall find other slaves hard at work on a new edition of the latest book that has been lucky enough to hit the popular taste. The thing that surprises us most is the marvellous cheapness of the books—often no more than a few pence. The main reason for this—to drop the pleasant fiction of the present tense—was not so much that the Roman author did not receive his share of the profits as that the publisher was able to employ his own slaves on an economical system which is as obsolete to-day as the gladiatorial combats in the amphitheatre. Slave-labour, with all its drawbacks, made it possible for ancient Rome to manage remarkably well without the printing press. With his trained staff of readers and transcribers a publisher could turn out an edition of any work at very cheap rates and almost at a moment's notice. There was no initial expense of type-setting before a single copy could be produced, no ruinous extras in the shape of printer's corrections. The manuscript came from the author; the publisher handed it over to his slaves; and, if a book of modest dimensions, the complete edition could be ready, if necessary, within twenty-four hours. There was a beautiful simplicity about this system, which, in spite of its technical deficiencies—chiefly in the form of corrupt and badly-written texts—must fill the breasts of some of our modern publishers with envy, when they think of their own complicated methods of production.

The slaves, it need scarcely be added, were specially trained and educated for their work. Martial, our most entertaining if not our most trustworthy guide through the book world of ancient Rome, tells us at the beginning of his second book of "Epigrams" that the transcriber could copy the manuscript of that book in an hour, "and his services not be confined to my trifles alone"; but as there are between 500 and 600 lines in the book in question Martial's estimate need not be taken as strictly



## THE FIRST "REMAINDER MARKET"

accurate. Even this system of editions "while you wait," so to speak, with its obvious advantage of making it possible to cope at once with any demand, did not always save publishers from the evils of over-production. From Cicero's letters to Atticus, and other references, we gather that the Romans were not without some sort of "Remainder Market"—the grave then, as now, of so many blighted hopes. The remainders of to-day suffer a less ignominious fate than that of a large proportion of the unsold copies in ancient Rome. There seems to have been no second-hand bookseller then to act the part of foster-father to them; or kindlier pulping machine to put an end to their misery at once. The more fortunate, apparently, were shipped to the provinces, but their common fate would seem to have been found in the fish-dealers' and other shops of the Roman tradespeople, there to be used for wrapping-up purposes. "If Apollinaris condemn thee," writes Martial, in one of his addresses to his book,\* "thou mayest run forthwith to the fish-sellers, to have thy back scribbled upon by the boys"—evidently with the customer's address, and possibly the price. How many classics were destroyed in this way, or perished in the household fires of Roman citizens, it is useless to speculate, but in all the rubbish that was sold as waste-paper there must have been lost many precious fragments. The shape of the book in those days lent itself admirably to these base uses. The volume as we understand it did not come into vogue until about the fifth century A.D. In ancient Greece and Rome, as in Egypt, it took very much the form of the mounted maps of modern days. The rolls were made of papyrus or parchment, and were written on only one side. The size of the roll naturally depended on the length of the work: The editions varied, according to the estimate of Theodor Birt, from 500 to 1000 copies. In one of his letters Pliny writes slightly of a book which Regulus had written on the loss of his son—"a whole book upon the life of a

\* Book IV. 86.



## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

boy!"—and for causing as many as a thousand copies to be distributed throughout the empire.\*

This publishing trade, like Rome itself, was far from being built in a day. It was only when the Romans became their own manufacturers, instead of sending to Alexandria for the books which were turned out wholesale there by trained staffs of copyists, that the publishing world of Rome began to reign supreme. With the Augustan age, in the latter half of the first century B.C., we arrive at last at something like a clear conception of what that trade amounted to. It is here that we reach the days of Titus Pomponius Atticus, the prince of friends and booksellers. Atticus stands apart from and above all other publishers of ancient Rome. He was the first man to lift the craft above the ordinary ranks of commercialism, to lay the foundations of its most honourable traditions; and though by no means the first publisher on record, there is none more worthy of the foremost place in the Booksellers' Roll of Honour. A scholar and author himself, he was Cicero's literary adviser, as well as publisher; and being possessed of great private wealth, was able to conduct his publishing business with something of that liberality and public-spiritedness which prompted George Smith in the nineteenth century to produce the "Dictionary of National Biography."

Atticus, like George Smith, seems to have been a man of enterprise and marked business ability. "You have sold my discourse on Ligarius so well," writes Cicero,† "that I shall entrust you with this duty for all my future works." Atticus evidently developed his publishing business on a large scale. He was not content to rely upon Alexandria for editions of the Greek classics; he had his own trained staff of slaves for copying, and "Attikians," as his editions came to be known, were the hall-mark of excellence. According to Theodor Birt, Atticus in course of time opened retail branches not only in Rome, but in the provinces as well.

\* "Epistles," Book IV. 7.

† "Ad Att." xiii. 12

## AUTHORS AND PUBLISHERS

Some of the Roman emperors exercised a strict censorship over literary property. Augustus on assuming the office of high priest had the book-shops, as well as private houses, searched for books of spurious Sibylline prophecies, both Latin and Greek, and committed the whole collection, amounting to upwards of two thousand copies, to the flames. Much more brutal outrages both on authors and publishers were perpetrated by Domitian. On one occasion, according to Suetonius, Domitian not only put to death Hermogenes of Tarsus because of certain passages in his history to which the tyrant objected, but crucified also the copiers who had issued the work.

It is impossible, with the fragmentary material at our disposal, to arrive at an exact knowledge of the business relations existing between authors and publishers in those days. Learned opinions are widely different on this subject. Theodor Birt\* believes, from various references of Horace and others, that the authors drew royalties or other payments for their work, and George Haven Putnam, the distinguished American publisher,† has adopted a similar view. Louis Haenny,‡ on the contrary, holds that the authors received nothing, and Professor Gaston Boissier§ sides with him. Personally we are inclined to throw in our vote with the "Noes." It is difficult, indeed, to see how it could be otherwise. Once a book found its way into circulation in ancient Rome it became common property. There was nothing to prevent the first man who bought Martial's new book of "Epigrams," for example, from making as many copies as he liked, and so spoiling the market.

What money was to be made out of Horace's books evidently fell to his publishers, for in the "Ars Poetica" he suggests that while his works, which pass even across the

\* "Das antike Buchwesen," 1882.

† "Authors and their Public in Ancient Times," 1894.

‡ "Schriftsteller und Buchhändler im Alten Rom," 1885.

§ "Tacitus and other Roman Studies," trans. by W. G. Hutchison, 1906.

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

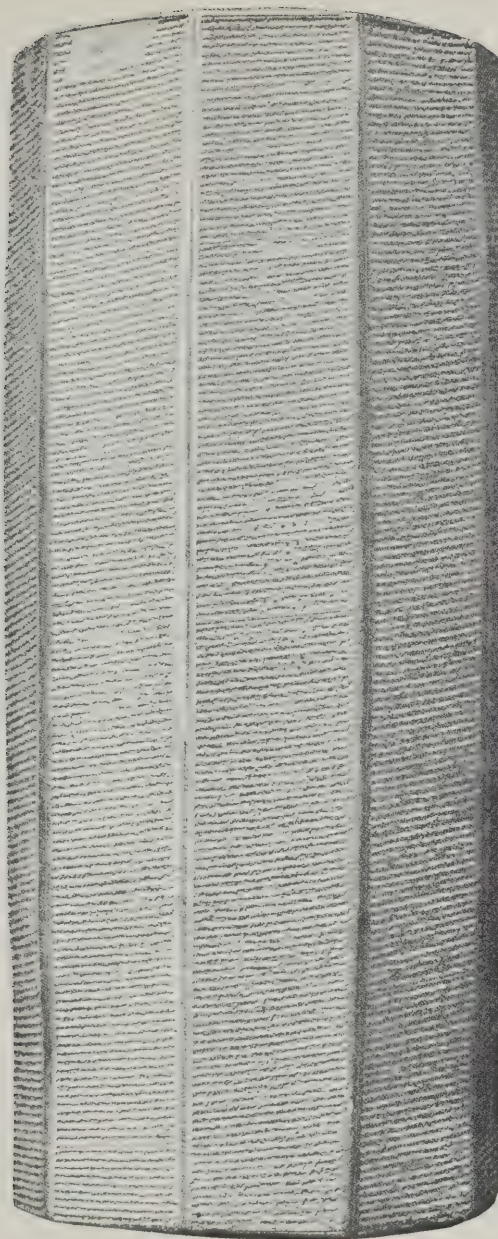
sea, bring gold to the Sosii, he himself reaps only widespread fame. Horace makes several references to the bookseller brothers who issued his works from their shop in the neighbourhood of the Temples of Janus and Vertumnus. One of these (Epistle XX.) is best translated in verse by Sir Theodore Martin, from which we may be permitted to quote the following lines :

I read the meaning of that wistful look  
Towards Janus and Vertumnus, O my book !  
Upon the Sosii's shelves you long to stand,  
Rubbed smooth with pumice by their skilful hand.  
You chafe at lock and modest seal ; you groan  
That you should only to a few be shown,  
And sigh by all the public to be read,  
You in far other notions trained and bred.  
Well, go your way, whereso you please and when,  
But, once set forth, you come not back again.  
“ Fool that I was ! Why did I change my lot ? ”  
You'll cry when wounded in some tender spot,  
And out of fashion and of favour grown,  
You're crumpled up, and into corners thrown.

You will be liked by Rome while in your bloom,  
But soon as e'er the thumbing and the soil  
Of vulgar hands shall your first freshness spoil,  
You will be left to nibbling worms a prey,  
Or sent as wrappers to lands far away.\*

We come down to Martial's day—a century or so after Horace's death—for another literary complaint, as well as a further illustration of the extensive circulations commanded by the popular Roman authors. “ It is not the idle people of the city only,” writes Martial, “ who delight in my muse ; nor is it to listless ears alone that these verses are addressed ; for my book is thumbed amid Getic frosts, near martial standards, by the stern centurion ; and even Britain is said to sing my verses. Yet what do I gain by it ? My purse knows nought of my

\* Literally, “ You will be shipped off to Utica, in Africa, or to Ilerda (Lerida), in Spain, tied up as wrappings for parcels.”—SIR THEODORE MARTIN.



BAKED CLAY CYLINDER  
INSCRIBED WITH THE ANNALS OF ASHUR-  
BANI-PAL, KING OF ASSYRIA FROM B.C.  
668 TO 626  
*From the original in the British Museum*





## MARTIAL'S LAMENT

fame.”\* But his chief cause of complaint, he proceeds, is that when the gods gave to the earth a second Augustus (by which he means Domitian) “they did not give thee, O Rome, a second Mæcenas.” Martial, like all the needy poets of his day, never ceased to think of the prizes that had fallen to the poets of a happier reign—the Sabian estate which Horace had received from Mæcenas, the 10,000,000 sesterces (about £80,000) which had fallen into Virgil’s lap. But times had changed; the court and aristocracy had now little but praise to bestow on the poets dependent upon them; and Martial begged Domitian’s assistance in vain. Authors, no longer rich enough, like Catullus and Lucretius, to employ their own slaves in copying their books for private circulation, were forced into the hands of the booksellers. They had to make their reputation before they could hope for imperial favours or wealthy patronage. Martial evidently thought that one of his booksellers at least made a handsome profit by his works, for he informs his reader† that “this thin little book” (the “Xenia”) will cost him four sesterces (about eightpence), but if four be too much “perhaps you may get it for two, and Trypho, the bookseller, will even then make a profit.”

Trypho is more favourably remembered as the bookseller to whom Quintilian dedicated the “*Institutio Oratoria*,” acknowledging that it was owing to his friendly importunity that his books were published, and begging him to see that they were issued as correctly as possible. Though Martial grumbled at the bookseller’s profit, it was to his own interest to obtain for his writings as wide a circulation as possible. He did not hesitate even to write his own advertisements, for no one was less ashamed than Martial of the gentle art of puffing. “That you may not be ignorant where I am to be bought,” he writes,‡ “and wander in uncertainty over the town, let me guide you to where you may be sure of obtaining me. Seek Secundus, the freedman of the learned Lucensis, behind

\* Book XI. 3.

† Book XIII. 3.

‡ Book II. 24.



## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

the Temple of Peace and the Forum of Pallas.” There was no imprint, it should be added, on Roman books, and such directions were by no means superfluous. Martial, like some of our modern authors, perhaps thought it worth while to set up a sort of rivalry among the publishers of his books, for he mentions yet another of them by name\*—one Quintus Pollius Valerianus, who had preserved the immature verses of the poet’s youth, and also sold other trifles which he had himself forgotten. Perhaps it was in order to prevent competition of this sort that the first Publishers’ Association was formed; for Dr. Putnam informs us, on the authority of Theodor Birt, that such a society was founded at the beginning of the second century. Little is known about it except that it was organised by the leading publishers of Rome “for the better protection of their interests in literary property, and that each member bound himself not to interfere with the undertakings of his fellow members.”

Most authors are familiar with the wiles of the book-borrower—ready enough to read their works, but never dreaming of buying them. The Roman authors, it seems, were similarly afflicted, but Martial had a neat way of dealing with such men, as is shown in the following translation of the epigram “To Lupercus”: † “When you meet me, Lupercus, you constantly say, ‘Shall I send my servant, so that you may give him your little book of epigrams, which I will read and return directly?’ There is no reason, Lupercus, to trouble your servant. It is a long journey to the Pirus [the sign of the Pear, the house on the Quirinal in which Martial had rooms from 86 to 90 A.D.], and I live up three steep flights of stairs. What you want you may obtain nearer at hand. You frequently go down to the Argiletum; opposite Cæsar’s forum is a shop, with pillars on each side covered with titles of books, so that you may quickly run over the names of the poets. Procure me there. You will no sooner ask Atrectus—such is the name of the owner of the

\* Book I. 113.

† *Ibid.* 117.

## UNSCRUPULOUS PLAGIARISTS

shop—than he will give you, from the first or second shelf, a Martial, with cover well polished with pumice-stone, decorated with purple, for five denarii.\* ‘I am not worth so much,’ you say? You are right, Lupercus.”

To Pontilianus, another would-be borrower, he writes with the same caustic wit: “Why do I not send you my book, Pontilianus? Lest you should send me yours, Pontilianus.”† The Roman authors had other grievances besides those against their publishers and friends. It was not only from motives of vanity that they indulged in the public and private recitations which became one of the features of their social life. The recitations, in addition to affording them their best form of advertisement, lessened, though it by no means removed, the risk, which every Roman author ran, of some unscrupulous plagiarist taking a new book, and in the most barefaced manner reissuing it, or large portions of it, as his own original work. Martial complains of the plagiarist in more than one of his “Epigrams.” “Do you imagine, Fidentinus,” he writes, in addressing one of these wretched creatures,‡ “that you are a poet by the aid of my verses, and do you wish to be thought so? Just so does Ægle think she has teeth from having purchased bone or ivory. Just so does Lycoris, who is blacker than the falling mulberry, seem fair in her own eyes because she is painted. You too, in exactly the way that you are a poet, will have flowing locks when you grow bald.”

Even the public recitations were not without some dangers of the sort, for, like the public libraries of Rome—of which we are told there were between twenty and thirty—they were free to all citizens. It was by no means an unknown thing for some one among these audiences to commit a new piece to memory and, hurriedly issuing it though the bookseller, put his own name to it as author. This is not so improbable as it may seem when

\* About four shillings, though the book could also be bought in a cheaper binding for less than half that price.

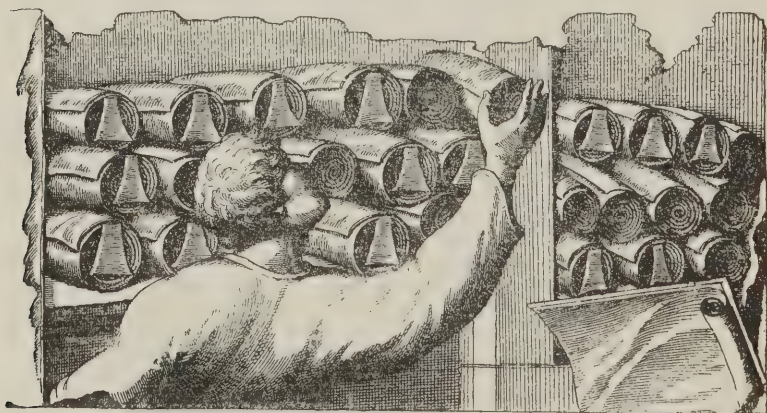
† Book VI. 3.

‡ Book I. 72.

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

we remember what remarkable memories were possessed by the citizens of ancient Rome and Greece. Memory was then cultivated as a gift of the highest order, and some of the achievements in this direction would be incredible were they not corroborated by so many writers. Pliny tells us, in one of his letters, of a Greek philosopher who was able, at the close of a long extempore oration, to repeat it word for word from beginning to end. Cyrus is said to have remembered the name of every soldier in his army. Julius Cæsar, according to Tully, never forgot anything but an injury.

But we have strayed into the tempting byways of purely literary history, and must return to the booksellers, remembering that even in those remote days literature was distributed as far afield as the conquered land of Britain, with which our history henceforth is chiefly concerned. Roman literature, and with it the Roman book trade, rapidly declined after the Silver Age of Latinity, and when Constantine I., early in the fourth century, transferred the capital of the Roman Empire to Byzantium the age of classical Latin was practically over.



IN A ROMAN BOOK-SHOP OR LIBRARY

PUTTING A ROLL BACK IN ITS PLACE THE ENDS OF THE  
ROLLS HAVE TICKETS BEARING THE TITLES OF THE WORKS)

## CHAPTER TWO : THROUGH THE DARK AGES

**W**HEN the Roman Empire was approaching its fall, and the inhabitants of Britain were left by their conquerors to shift for themselves, any method of book distribution which may have existed among the Roman camps disappeared with them. To write an account of the book trade in England in the "long night of the Dark Ages" is not unlike compiling the history of snakes in Iceland. We can only gather up the threads here and there as we stumble through the centuries until we come to the system of distribution as it gradually developed in the days of the monks. The Anglo-Saxon invasion in the fifth century destroyed whatever remnants of intellectual life remained in the island, save for a handful of fugitive scholars in the west, and the monastic schools of Wales—whence proceeded the men who shared in the making of the famous schools which now sprang up in Ireland. Safe from the devastation of Europe by the barbarians, Ireland became the sanctuary of thousands of fugitives, and its monasteries the training-ground for missionaries, who in turn carried back their scholarship to the English and other Teutonic nations. To England came not only this monastic learning, but, in the seventh century, the educational stimulus of the Roman missionaries under the influence of which three great schools were to rise into prominence—Canterbury, Jarrow, and York—until England in turn led the van of intellectual progress.

There must have been some sort of recognised system of book distribution at the back of this intellectual revival. The epics of the Anglo-Saxons were spread by recitation and preserved by memory, but among the scholars themselves a considerable traffic in books was inevitable. This traffic was probably based on the long traditions of Rome brought by the Roman missionaries, but of this we can only judge by inference. There are occasional scraps



## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

of evidence to show that in the downfall of the Empire the book trade had not been completely extinguished in Italy—and perhaps in Gaul as well—but the attempt to bridge the gulf between the classic trade and the English reading world of the early manuscript days is at the best unsatisfactory. We read of Benedict Biscop's several journeys to and from Rome, and elsewhere, laden with precious volumes for the great twin abbeys of Wearmouth and Jarrow, the first of which he founded in 674 and the second in 682; of the literary additions made by his successor Ceolfrid; of book-lovers like Aldhelm, Bede, and Acca; of Aldfrith of Northumberland ordering copies of Adamnan's book "*De Locis Sacris*" for the use of "lesser persons"; of Ælbert's noble library at York; and of other evidences of England's scholarly activity in these early middle ages. But the system of book distribution which lay behind this development was less of a regular trade than in the days of Imperial Rome. Books were now written and published by the authors themselves, as in the more distant ages of antiquity. Bede, whom we still love to call the "Venerable," kept in touch with the monasteries not only of England, but of the Continent, and had copiers at work as far away as Rome. He may be said to have published his "*History*" from the monastic cell at Jarrow in which he spent most of his life, for when it was finished—in or about the year 731, at which it is brought to an end—he sent the book thence to his friend Albinus, an ecclesiastic who had urged him to undertake the work and helped him with information. "Wherefore," he writes, "I have with great propriety sent it to you, as I was able to find it, to be copied. But I intend to repay you by forwarding to you another volume for the same purpose . . . namely, that which I have lately published on the building of Solomon's Temple, and its allegorical signification. And I humbly beseech you, most loving father, and Christ's servants who are with you, to intercede fervently with the righteous in behalf of my frailty; and to admonish those to whom you shall show



## A FIRST PUBLICATION IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

*Charles VIII. of France receiving the manuscript of the Exposition of the Apostles' Creed, in rhymed Latin verse, from the author, Marc Picault. Presentations of this character by authors to their patrons practically constituted the first publication of books in the Middle Ages. The illustration is from the illuminated frontispiece in the Rothschild collection of manuscripts at the British Museum.*





## OUR EARLIEST BOOK LIST

my work to do the same. Fare you well, my good and ever loving father in Christ." \*

That was the pious way they had of publishing books in those days, just as, later in the Middle Ages, we can see, in several illuminated manuscripts, John Lydgate on his knees before Henry VI., or some other generous patron, presenting him with a copy of his new book of poems. Such a presentation, as in the case of Bede's offering to Albinus, practically constituted the first publication of a new work. When Bede died—to return to our little book world of the eighth century—the seat of learning passed from Jarrow to York, which then became the centre of education in Western Europe. It was Ælbert's famous library, already referred to, which furnished us, thanks to Alcuin's metrical account of its treasures, with the earliest book list of which we have any knowledge. The catalogue shows us that in addition to the books of such native scholars as Bede and Aldhelm, York possessed the works of Augustine, Jerome, Hilary, Ambrose, Gregory, Athanasius, Pope Leo, Basil, Chrysostom, and other Fathers of the Church. Virgil, Statius, and Lucanus were among the classics, together with Propertius, Aratus, Juvenius, one of the earliest of the Christian poets, and Lactantius, the "Christian Cicero," who enjoyed a great vogue in the Middle Ages. Among historians and philosophers were Pliny, Boethius, Orosius, Aristotle, and Cicero; and the formidable list of grammarians includes Phocas, Donatus, Probus, Priscianus, Servius, Eutychius, and Commianus.

The fame of this library spread throughout Europe. It was a literary treasure-house to which most scholars turned until Alcuin left England for Charlemagne's court towards the end of the eighth century, when the centre of education was transferred to the schools of Charles the Great. The decay of learning in England had already set in before Alcuin left the country, and in

\* "Biographical Writings and Letters of Bede," trans. by J. A. Giles, 1845.

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

the ninth century the Danes completed its destruction. We are again forced to wander abroad for our next traces of the book world, and these are only to be found in the monasteries.

The production and preservation of books as well as their serious study had been one of the leading principles of monastic life since the early part of the sixth century, when St. Benedict, striking at the roots of the evil which threatened the very existence of monachism, branded idleness as "the enemy of the soul," and added the vow of labour to the other rules of poverty, chastity, and obedience. The later orders followed St. Benedict's sagacious example, and the monasteries became the one recognised home and refuge of Letters—the Vestal Virgins, as a French writer has said, who, through all the vicissitudes of the Dark Ages, prevented the sacred lamp of learning from burning out. The phrase is specially appropriate when applied to the nuns, who played a noble part in the preservation and distribution of sacred literature. Some of the most beautiful manuscripts that have come down to us were produced by mediæval nuns.

How religiously the scribes approached their work may be gathered from an eighth-century manuscript, in which we find one of the *scriptoria* receiving the following form of benediction: "Vouchsafe, O Lord, to bless this *scriptorium* of thy servants, and all that dwell therein; that whatsoever sacred writings shall be here read or written by them, they may receive with understanding and bring the same to good effect, through the Lord," &c.\* The monks have often been accused of scraping ancient parchments in order to substitute their own writings for the texts of Greek and Latin classics, but as most of these palimpsests were made after the Norman Conquest, when parchment became increasingly valuable, it is more probable that the manuscripts of the earlier middle ages were thus treated than the older parchment of the classics.

\* S. R. Maitland's "Dark Ages," 3rd edition, 1853, p. 407.

## LOST LITERARY TREASURES

Some of the greatest sinners, too, were not only the degenerate monks, but the notaries of the later middle ages, whose practice of scraping old manuscripts to make room for title-deeds and other prosaic documents became so destructive that at length they were not allowed to enter their profession until they had taken an oath to use none but new parchment. We do not mean that the practice was unknown among the monks before the tenth or twelfth century, but our losses in this respect have been greatly exaggerated. And our gains have been by no means inconsiderable—legends of the saints, treatises of the Fathers of the Church, and possibly some of the early chronicles with which English history especially is so richly endowed. For almost every monastery of importance had its own historiographer, whose duty it was to carry on the annals left by his predecessor. It may not be out of place, in connexion with the losses so frequently attributed to the monks of the Dark Ages, to quote the remark which Gibbon made in discussing the fate of the Alexandrian library and the other great collections involved in the ruin of the Roman Empire: “When I seriously compute the lapse of ages, the waste of ignorance, and the calamities of war, our treasures, rather than our losses, are the object of my surprise. Many curious and interesting facts are buried in oblivion; the three great historians of Rome have been transmitted to our hands in a mutilated state, and we are deprived of many pleasing compositions of the lyric, iambic, and dramatic poetry of the Greeks. Yet we should gratefully remember that the mischances of time and accident have spared the classic works to which the suffrages of antiquity had adjudged the first place of genius and glory: the teachers of ancient knowledge, who are still extant, had perused and compared the writings of their predecessors; nor can it fairly be presumed that any important truth, any useful discovery of art or nature, has been snatched away from the curiosity of modern ages.”

Some at least of the monastic book-makers of the Dark

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

Ages proved themselves worthy successors of Atticus in the pains which they took to secure the accuracy of their texts. Maitland furnishes some striking illustrations of this in his extracts from Pez's "*Codex Diplomatico-historico-epistolaris*.\* There are tenth-century letters, for example, from Froumond, a monk of Tegern-See, to a brother monk named Reginbald—supposed to have been at St. Emmeram's—which clearly prove their anxiety in this respect. Reginbald on one occasion regrets that he cannot send a certain book that Froumond has asked him to lend, "because, though the book thus wanted was in his library, he doubted of its correctness; but he would see, and if it appeared that it would be of service, would endeavour to bring it when he should come." In another letter Froumond begs Reginbald "to lend him a Horace to copy a morsel which his book did not contain—if he had not that at hand to send him some other book that would be useful, and to return a book of his which he had, by the bearer"; and then follows a letter to the same monk, "rebuking him for sending back his book in such a condition—crumpled, dirty, and without the map of the world which had been at the beginning." As to this *commercium librorum*, says Maitland, it would be easy to multiply examples, and other curious illustrations of the kind will be found in his book. Some of the best of these are contained in the letters written in the tenth century by Pope Silvester II. at the time when he was Abbot of Bobbio. In a letter to Egbert, Abbot of Tours, he describes how he had collected the books for his library. He had been paying, for a long time, he explains, transcribers not only in Rome, but in other parts of Italy, as well as in Germany and Belgium, besides buying copies of authors at great expense, by the aid of friends in his own country. He then proceeds to beg the abbot to help him as far as possible in *his* country, adding a list of books that he would like transcribed—though this, unfortunately, has not been preserved—and offering to

\* "The Dark Ages," p. 503.



## THE COMING OF THE NORMANS

supply parchment, and other necessary costs, at the abbot's demand. References such as these are only side-lights, but they serve at least to show that some clearly defined system of book-making existed at the time on the Continent.

In England monachism, after falling into complete decay, was only just beginning to revive. Alfred worked wonders in his efforts to kindle a new enthusiasm for education and literature towards the end of the ninth century, and in the following century his efforts bore fruit in the re-creation of the monasteries under St. Dunstan and King Edgar. But the people themselves were too busy fighting for their lives and homes against the Danes to profit greatly by the revival. It is not until the Norman-French cultivation has made its way into England in the eleventh century that we can follow the book trade in this country with any degree of continuity. With the Norman Conquest England was brought definitely into the full current of European culture, and received an impetus which she sorely needed to her whole national life.

But in the ecclesiastical settlement under William the Conqueror and Lanfranc both the Anglo-Saxon books and the monks who had so patiently compiled them were often shamefully treated, however much the intellectual standard of the Church may have been raised in the process. The Norman bishops and abbots by whom the native ecclesiastics were displaced despised the Anglo-Saxon writings which they found in their new monasteries. Many Anglo-Saxon books were cut up for binding, or erased to make room for some transcript in Latin, Latin gradually superseding the Anglo-Saxon which had been employed in all the national literature since Alfred's day. Norman monks were doubtless introduced for their skill as transcribers and decorative artists, though the art of illuminating manuscripts, which is as old almost as humanity itself, had already been brought to a high state of perfection in England, having been introduced

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

from Ireland centuries before. The finest of the existing specimens bear witness both to the skill and infinite patience of these unknown craftsmen. It is not surprising that books in those days could be so costly, or that the *scriptorium* of the monastery in which such work was done was sometimes so jealously guarded that no visitors were allowed there except the abbot, the prior, the sub-prior, and the precentor. That, at least, was one of the rules of St. Victor, and similar restrictions were probably in force at most monasteries where gold and jewels were freely used in the binding and illuminating of books. The art of decoration and illumination became everywhere so splendidly ornate that Odofredi, the Bolognese jurist, had some cause for complaining, in the thirteenth century, that writers were no longer writers, but painters. For law books were frequently as resplendent as missals, psalters, and prayer-books. It is not fair, however, to regard the cost of such sumptuous works as these as a true index to the prices of books in the Middle Ages. Doubtless it was more for its binding and decoration than its intrinsic worth that the Countess of Anjou paid in the year 1056 for a copy of the homilies of Haimon, Bishop of Halberstadt, two hundred sheep, a hogshead of wheat, another of rye, a third of millet, and a certain number of marten skins.\* The simple truth, as Maitland truly says, is that there has always been such a thing as bibliomania since there have been books in the world.

As the manuscript period reached its more elaborate stage the makers of books in the monasteries specialised in their different departments of work. One monk would prepare the parchment by rubbing it with powdered pumice-stone, or obtain suitable "pounce," such as the powdered bone of the cuttle-fish. Then he would cut it into sheets of the required size, and, having ruled the pages, hand it to the monk whose particular *forte* was writing. The scribe himself would leave the initials and

\* "Histoire Littéraire de la France," par des Religieux Benedictins, tome vii., 1746, p. 3.

## MONASTIC BOOKMEN

borders for the illuminators, whose work seems frequently to have been neglected—or, maybe, stayed by the hand of Death, if we are to judge by the number of unfinished manuscripts which have come down to us. It is not difficult to imagine ourselves back in one of these secluded bookshops as we turn over the pages of an early fourteenth-century missal, for example, with its glowing splashes of burnished gold, and decorative effects as vivid in colouring to-day, almost, as when the monks themselves were putting the finishing touches to the work. The small “leading letter” for one of its elaborate initials, left by the transcriber for the guidance of the illuminator, has been left as it stood; and on the last page the outline sketches have never been filled up. It recalls the story of that monk of Wedinghausen, in Westphalia, who died at his desk, his pen still in his hand. Years afterwards, we are told, his grave was opened, whereupon it was found that his good right hand was as fresh and firm of flesh as on the day of his death. And, lest any one should doubt this story, the hand and pen may be seen to this day among the holy relics preserved in the monastery chapel.

When the *scriptorium* was situated in the cloisters the bays were generally reserved for the scribes, probably because of the light, wooden desks and seats being placed under each window. These little studies, or “carrels,” were in many cases enclosed as far as possible, but they must have been horribly draughty, and bitterly cold at times. It is some consolation to know that the monks were entitled to visit the kitchen when their work was done.\* The carrels at Durham are described by an early writer as being “no greater than from one stanchell of the window to the next. And over against the carrels did stand against the church wall great almeries, or cupboards of wainscot, all full of books (with a great store of ancient MSS.) . . . wherein did lie as well the old ancient written Doctors of the Church, as other profane

\* Maitland's “Dark Ages,” p. 407.

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

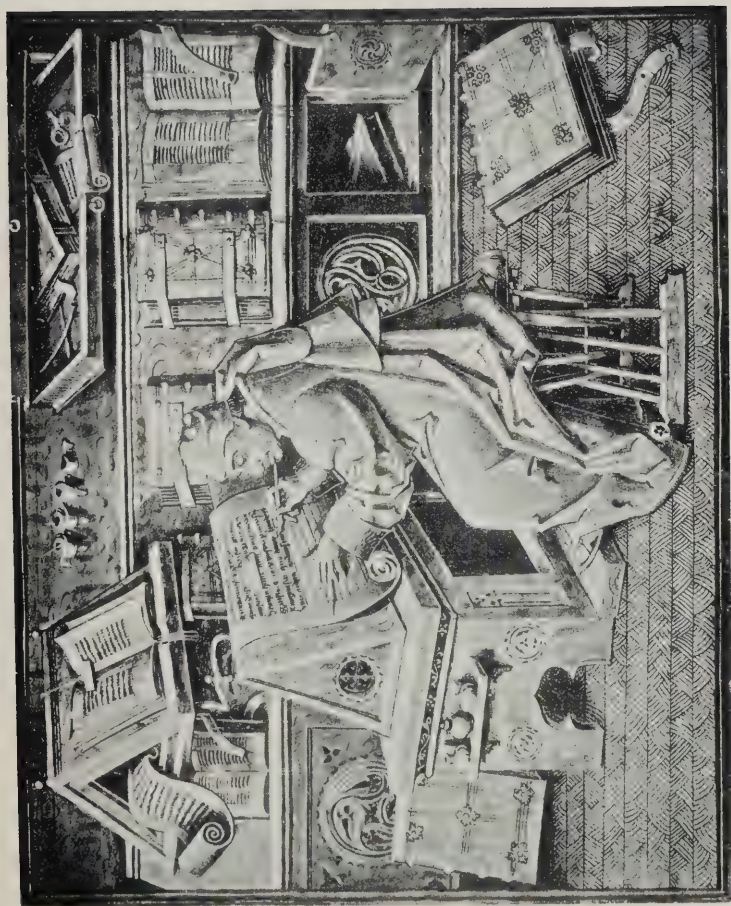
authors, with divers other holy men's works, so that every one did study what Doctor pleased them best, having the library at all times to go study in besides the carrels." \* At Westminster, though they had these carrels as well, there was evidently a library, which may also have been used for writing purposes. In some monasteries the monks were wise enough to give the *scriptorium* the benefit of the calefactory by placing it next to that apartment, which was heated, it is hardly necessary to explain, in order that the monks might go there to warm themselves.

The system varied under different Orders, but the duties of librarian were generally discharged by the precentor. The abbot himself was responsible for the choice of books to be transcribed. He had also to see that there was work both for the *antiquarii* and the *librarii*, for the transcribers—though here again the rule varied—were divided into two sections, the *antiquarii* having the copying of such old favourites of conventual life as Pliny's "Naturali Historia" and the "Consolatione Philosophæ" of Boetius, the *librarii* being more particularly engaged in transcribing new and less important books. All were employed at various times in copying the Scriptures and devotional works. Not many of these primitive bookshops bothered about catalogues, though a sufficient number remain to give us a general idea of their scope. Sometimes, as if to remind themselves of their treasures as often as possible, they would inscribe verses in their windows, describing the books placed near them, and painting above the verses the portraits of the authors. Twelve of these remarkable window catalogues, belonging to the monastic library of St. Albans, were found in the cloisters and presbytery of that monastery. One window, for example, indicated the books of poetry and rhetoric, and contained above the verses the portraits of Cicero, Sallust, Orpheus, and Musæus.

There was a strict, if variable, system of lending and

\* "The Rites of Durham": an early account of the Benedictine House at Durham (Surtees Society), 1844, p. 70.





A SCRIPTORIUM [1456]  
*From a manuscript in the French National Library, Paris*





## MONASTERIES AS LENDING LIBRARIES

borrowing books, even in the monasteries themselves. In certain cases books could not be lent except to neighbouring churches, or to persons of distinction and substantial means; and then only on the deposit of books or other articles of at least equal value. King John, when he borrowed "the book called Pliny" which had been in the custody of the Abbot and Convent of Reading, had to give a pledge for it. Some monasteries went so far as to refuse to make any loan of the kind, under no less a penalty than that of excommunication. This appears to have been the case at the Abbey of Croyland, where, according to the so-called "History of Ingulph," "the lending of their books, as well the smaller without pictures as the larger with pictures," was thus strictly forbidden. For greater safety the books in the libraries were often chained to the desks. "Cursed be he who shall steal or tear out the leaves, or in any way injure this book," is the anathema which will be found inscribed in some of these old volumes; as, indeed, was advised by that prince of fourteenth-century book-lovers, Richard de Bury, Bishop of Durham, in "Philobiblon": "There are also certain thieves who enormously dismember books by cutting off the side margins for letter paper, leaving only the letters or text, or the fly leaves put in for the preservation of the book, which they take away for various uses and abuses, which sort of sacrilege ought to be prohibited under a threat of anathema." A choice collection of these monkish warnings will be found in Mr. J. W. Clark's learned work on "The Care of Books."

If all that the worthy Bishop says in "Philobiblon" be true the monks of his day had sadly degenerated. They had little of his own reverential devotion to study, being more intent on the "emptyings of bowls" and "such things as we are accustomed to forbid to secular men" than on the wisdom and companionship of books. They were, indeed, reverting to the old order of things which, centuries before, had induced St. Benedict to institute the vow of labour, and a century or so later was to lead to

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

the downfall of monachism in England. Though books in manuscript were never so brutally treated as during the suppression of the monasteries by Henry VIII., they now suffered many cruel indignities through the laxity of discipline and morals among those whose predecessors had proved so worthy of the sacred trust imposed upon them. Every student of the subject knows the story of how Boccaccio paid a visit to the famous monastery of Monte Cassino, the foundation of which was laid by St. Benedict himself, and was horrified at the deplorable condition in which he found the library there. Dust and dirt lay an inch thick everywhere, covering and corroding manuscripts which would now be of priceless value. The weeds on the window-sills had grown so thick and tall that the whole room was darkened; but Boccaccio saw clearly enough to notice that many of the books had been brutally mutilated, some having half their contents forcibly removed, and others—as in the cases complained of by his English contemporary Richard de Bury—having their margins cut away. More in sorrow than in anger, Boccaccio went to one of the monks in the cloisters and asked how it was that the books had been so treated. The monk admitted quite frankly and unconcernedly that when they wanted a few pence they cut off the blank margins of the old manuscripts or erased some of the pages and turned them into small devotional books, for which there seems to have been a ready sale. And not a word about the shameful state of neglect into which everything had been allowed to fall. Records of this description are mostly from the Continent, but Richard de Bury's bitter complaint, and other references, leave us little room for supposing that our own monks at this period were much better. In a passage in Richard de Bury's "*Philobiblon*" which we are tempted to quote at length the books themselves are allowed to air their grievances:

In the first place, we are expelled with heart and hand from the domiciles of the clergy, apportioned to us by hereditary right,

## “ A BIPED BEAST ”

in some interior chamber of which we had our peaceful cells : but, to their shame, in these nefarious times we are altogether banished to suffer opprobrium out of doors. Our places, moreover, are occupied by hounds and hawks, and sometimes by a biped beast ; woman to wit,—whose cohabitation was formerly shunned by the clergy, from whom we have ever taught our pupils to fly, more than from the asp and the basilisk ; wherefore this beast, ever jealous of our studies, and at all times implacable, spying us at last in a corner, protected only by the web of some long deceased spider, drawing her forehead into wrinkles, laughs us to scorn, abuses us in virulent speeches, points us out as the only superfluous furniture lodged in the whole house ; complains that we are useless for any purpose of domestic economy whatever, and recommends our being bartered away forthwith for costly head-dresses, cambric, silk, twice-dipped purple garments, woollen, linen, and furs : and indeed with reason, if she could see the interior of our hearts, or be present at our secret councils, or could read the volumes of Theophrastus and Valerius, or at least hear the 25th Chapter of Ecclesiasticus with the ears of understanding.

We complain, therefore, because our domiciles are unjustly taken from us,—not that garments are not given to us, but that those which were formerly given are torn off by violent hands, inasmuch that our souls adhere to the pavement, our belly is agglutinated to the earth, and our glory is reduced to dust. (Ps. xliv. and cxix.) We labour under various diseases ; our back and sides ache, we lie down disabled and paralyzed in every limb, nobody thinks of us, nor is there any one who will benignly apply an emollient to our sores. Our native whiteness, perspicuous with light, is now turned tawny and yellow ; so that no medical man who may find us out, can doubt that we are infected with jaundice. Some of us are gouty, as our distorted extremities evidently indicate. The damp, smoke, and dust with which we are constantly infested, dim the field of our visual rays, and superinduce ophthalmia upon our already bleared eyes. Our stomachs are destroyed by the severe griping of our bowels, which greedy worms never cease to gnaw. We suffer corruption inside and out,<sup>†</sup> and nobody is found to anoint us with turpentine ; or who, calling to us on the fourth day of putrefaction, will say, “ Lazarus, come forth.” . . .

Again : we complain of another kind of calamity, that is very often unjustly imposed upon our persons ; for we are sold like slaves and female captives, or left as pledges in taverns without redemption.

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

Richard de Bury himself kept his own staff of transcribers, and took advantage of all the facilities then available for adding to his beloved library. Churchmen eager for his favours searched for him in all parts of the Continent, and he never missed an opportunity, when calling at a monastery, of visiting the library chests and other repositories of books; "for there, amidst the deepest poverty, we found heaped up the most exalted treasures." In addition to these exceptional facilities, he adds that: "We easily acquired the notice of the stationers and librarians, not only within the provinces of our native soil, but of those dispersed over the kingdoms of France, Germany, and Italy, by the prevailing power of money. No distance whatever impeded, no fury of the sea deterred them; nor was cash wanting for their expenses when they sent or brought us the wished-for books." Unfortunately neither the Bishop's library which he collected with so much care and devotion nor the "special catalogue" which he drew up for the use of his scholars is any longer in existence. The books were destroyed or dispersed in Henry VIII.'s reign, during the suppression of Durham College, which the Bishop founded at Oxford on the site now occupied by Trinity College.

The ready means of private book distribution in England in the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries are indicated in the wide circulation of the completed translation of the Bible by John Wycliffe, who died in 1384. This version, revised by John Purvey, was severely proscribed by the Convocation of Canterbury in January 1409, yet copies of it were spread all over the country by various unauthorised means until superseded by Tynedale's translation and other printed versions in the first half of the sixteenth century. There is additional evidence of some early system of book distribution in the signs which exist of the extensive circulation of William Langland's "Vision of Piers Plowman." Langland, who died somewhere about the year 1400, issued his poem in three distinct forms, or editions, and some



## THE FIRST STATIONERS

fifty manuscript copies are known to be still in existence. There was less money to be made by poetry in Langland's day even than now, and, in that sense, the poet profited nothing by his works, notwithstanding their popularity. Nor did he seek reward at the hands of some wealthy patron, preferring, apparently, to live the life of poverty and unselfishness which he preached so earnestly in the old alliterative measure of his Anglo-Saxon poem. Doubtless he was his own publisher—if we may use such a term in this connexion—issuing copies of his work in his own hand from his house in Cornhill, where he lived with his wife Kitte for many years.

The growth of the mediæval university marks the beginning of a new chapter in the history of bookselling. The coming of paper and the increasing demand for books among the people had already given birth to a new class of book-makers, the scribes and *stationarii*—so called, according to Kirchoff, to distinguish the stationary, or resident, booksellers from the wandering pedlars. Thomas Fuller offers a similar derivation, but it is much more quaintly put in his seventeenth-century English: “*Stationarii*—publicly avouching the sale of staple-books in standing shops (whence they have their names) as opposite to such circumforanean pedlars (ancestors to our modern Mercuries and hawkers) which secretly vend prohibited books.” Henry Hallam, in his “Literature of Europe,” says that “these mediæval booksellers were denominated *stationarii* perhaps from the open stalls at which they carried on their business, though *statio* is a general word for shop, in Low Latin. They appear by the old statutes of Paris, and by those of Bologna, to have sold books on commission; and are sometimes, though not uniformly, distinguished from the *librarii*; a word which, having originally been confined to the copyists of books, was afterwards applied to those who traded in them. They sold parchment and other material for writing, which, with us, though, as far as I know, nowhere else, have retained the name of stationery, and naturally exercised

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

the kindred occupations of binding and decorating. They probably employed transcribers." In Paris, which in the fourteenth century was the great book-market of the world, the stationers were controlled by the universities, and appear to have acted at first mainly as book-lenders. Their shops were in reality circulating libraries for the scholars. They sold books only as agents for the owners of manuscripts committed to their care, receiving a commission in this case of a bare two or three per cent. When they came to issue books of their own copying every work of the kind had to be submitted to the university for approval, and sold only at the price at which it was then assessed. There was reason in all this, for the Paris book trade appears to have owed its organisation and development largely, if not entirely, to the university, and the university saw to it that it fulfilled the purpose for which it was originally intended, namely, that of supplying the educational needs of the scholars, without at the same time contaminating their minds with doubtful or heretical books. Much the same system of control prevailed at the older University of Bologna, and other Italian universities, as well as at Oxford and Cambridge.

Some curious facts regarding the status of the university booksellers in England may be gleaned from Mr. George Gray's work on "The Earlier Stationers and Bookbinders, and the First Cambridge Printer," issued for the Bibliographical Society in 1904. The first reference to the Cambridge booksellers is in a decision of 1276, in which it is declared that the "writers, illuminators, and stationers, who serve the scholars only," were subject, like the members of the university, to the jurisdiction of the Chancellor, and could not be interfered with by the Archdeacon of Ely, who had claimed jurisdiction over the university, as well as over the town. The wives of the said writers, illuminators, and stationers were rather heartlessly abandoned to the tender mercies of the Archdeacon. For these, it is added, "being under the charge of adultery or any other crime, the cognizance

## OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE STATIONERS

and correction of which pertains to the Archdeacon in similar cases concerning other persons under his jurisdiction, and the rest of their family, not especially deputed to the service of the scholars, shall be under the Archdeacon's jurisdiction in all and everything, like other lay-persons in the town of Cambridge and our diocese of Ely."

The stationers could only sell books which had been approved by the Chancellor as being free from heretical opinions. The power of the Oxford and Cambridge Universities as censors of the book world in those days is seen in the series of resolutions for the suppression of Lollardism passed at the Convocation of Canterbury early in 1409.

Among other things it was ordained that no book or tract compiled by John Wycliffe, or by any one else in his time or since, or to be compiled hereafter, should be read or taught in the schools, hostels, or other places within the province, unless it should first be examined by the Universities of Oxford or Cambridge, or at least by twelve persons to be elected by each of these bodies, and afterwards expressly approved of by the Archbishop or his successors; that, when approved, the book should be delivered, in the name and by the authority of the university, to the stationers to be copied; and a faithful collation being made, the original should be deposited in the chest of the university, there to remain for ever.

The first "stationarius of the University" of Cambridge of whom we have any record is one John Hardy, referred to in one of the records as early as 1350, but for a hundred years after Hardy's death there is no mention of any one holding such a post. From 1449 onwards, however, there is a constant succession of them. Their peculiar position and duties are thus defined by Mr. Stanley Leathes from entries in the Grace Book of the university: \*

*Stationaries:* These persons occupied an anomalous position. They were not students, nor were they exactly servants or tradesmen. They were the official agents of the University for

\* "Grace Book A, 1454-88," edited by S. M. Leathes, 1897.

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

the sale of pledges,\* and official valuers of manuscripts and other valuables offered as security [by needy students]. They seem to have received an occasional fee from the chest. The analogy of other Universities suggests that they were bound to supply books to the students at a fixed tariff, and that they also acted as intermediaries between buyer and seller when a student had a book to sell. Like the servants and tradesmen dependent on the University, they were under the University jurisdiction.

As at Oxford there appears in the fifteenth century to have been only one stationarius appointed—though the number increased after the introduction of printing—and various entries suggest that he was paid a yearly sum by the university. Other entries point to the interesting fact that the stationarius was also supplied with a gown as a distinctive mark of his office. He was also responsible for the binding and repairing of books, as well as the chaining of them. The chains cost from 2*d.* to 4*d.* each. “That the University did not monopolise the whole of the time of their stationarius,” says Mr. Gray, “is shown by John Hardy (1351–54) being also an official in the Corpus Christi Gild, and by Walter Hartley, the last of the fifteenth-century stationers, who added to his work the post of parish clerk to the University church of St. Mary the Great, and saw to the cleansing of the pavements leading to the University buildings.”

The first stationer to figure in the Oxford records is one Robert, who was a “notary and stationer in catte-strete” in the year 1308, but there are references to scribes and illuminators as far back at least as 1180. At the beginning of 1374 the number of booksellers in Oxford appears to have been so excessive that the university decreed that none except the sworn stationers, or their deputies, should sell any book exceeding half a mark in value. According to the terms of that statute, there were a great many booksellers in Oxford at that time

\* Pledges, or “cautions,” were deposited by every student as a guarantee that he would perform the requisite acts on admission to a degree. The “cautions” were forfeited if he failed in the performance.



## FORERUNNERS OF STATIONERS' COMPANY

who were not sworn to the university, with the result that "books of great value are sold and carried away from Oxford, the owners of them are cheated, and the sworn stationers are deprived of their lawful business." \*

The Oxford booksellers evidently continued in rather a bad way, for we learn from the same authority that in 1411 the university enacted that, "as the duties of the University stationers are laborious and anxious, every one on graduation shall give clothes to one of the stationers." But the Oxford stationer was not the only book-maker of his century to find himself short of clothes. In the Paston Letters there is a pitiful appeal from Sir John Paston's scrivener, who, writing from Sanctuary for a settlement of his account for books copied, adds that he will be grateful for the gift of an old gown.

In London the scriveners, or Writers of the Court Hand and Text Letters—the forerunners of the Stationers' Company—have been traced back in the civic records to the year 1357, while Chaucer was still a royal page and his Canterbury Pilgrimage probably as yet undreamt of; but they must have been in existence as recognised copiers and sellers of books long before then. Later—on July 12, 1403—we find all the various members of the original fraternity grouped together in a memorial to the Mayor and Aldermen of London, dated July 12,† 1403, as "the reputable men of the Craft of Writers of Text-letters, those commonly called Limners [Illuminators] and other good folk; citizens of London, who were wont to bind and to sell books." In their memorial these reputable men prayed for authority to elect wardens "diligently to oversee that good rule and governance is had and exercised by all folks of the same trades in all works with the said trades pertaining, to the praise and good fame of the loyal good men of the same trades, and to the shame and blame of the bad and disloyal men of the same." The petition was granted by the Mayor and

\* "Early Oxford Press," by Falconer Madan, 1895.

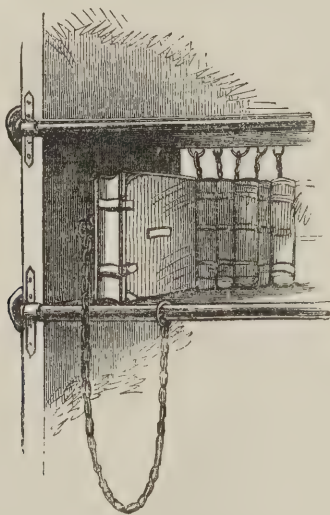
† Arber's "Registers of the Stationers' Company," vol. i., 1875.



## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

Aldermen, "for the reason especially that it concerned the common weal and profit." The five-hundredth anniversary of the guild thus founded was commemorated by the Stationers' Company in 1904.

In Chaucer's day—and, indeed, throughout the Middle Ages—the copiers of books attached little importance to authors' names, unless posterity had already made them famous. New books had nothing in the shape of a title-page. There is good reason for supposing that Chaucer read Boccaccio's tales without knowing the name of the author to whom he was so deeply indebted. The modern title-pages came in with the printing press, though Caxton, who, like most early printers, transferred many features of the manuscript book into the printed copy, never seems to have adopted this new idea. Conservative in his tastes, it is not unlikely that he had many an argument on the subject with his friend, assistant, and successor, Wynkyn de Worde, who introduced the title-page almost immediately after his master's death.



CHAINED BOOKS IN THE CHAPTER  
LIBRARY, HEREFORD

## CHAPTER THREE : THE DAWN OF PRINTING

THE invention of printing enables us to gather up the scattered threads of our story, though it is still by no means easy to weave them into a satisfactory web. Our own early printers, heavily handicapped by their lateness in practising the new art, were faced by foreign competition, keen and well organised, and they were wise to feel their way cautiously. Caxton, who set up his press at Westminster in 1476, appears to have begun modestly enough, and to have made sure of a certain subscription before embarking on some of his larger ventures. In his "Legend of Saints" he tells us: "I have submysed [submitted] myself to translate into English the 'Legend of Saints,' called '*Legenda aurea*' in Latin; and William, Earl of Arundel, desired me—and promised to take a reasonable quantity of them—and sent me a worshipful gentleman, promising that my said lord should during my life give and grant me a yearly fee, that is to note, a buck in summer and a doe in winter." The nobility were then the chief patrons of printed literature in England, for the simple reason that there were not enough readers among the common people to justify the printing of a large edition of any book; and naturally the more limited the number of copies the higher would be the price charged for each.

Unfortunately Caxton's account-book has not been preserved, so that it is impossible to say how much he charged for the works which are now worth more than their weight in gold. The only clue that we have is in the fact that the fifteen copies of "Legends" which he left to St. Margaret's, Westminster, realised prices ranging from 5s. 4d. to 6s. 8d.; and even this fact is not so illuminating as it seemed down even to William Blades's day, for Caxton's biographer, like every other authority until quite recently, assumed that the books bequeathed by the printer were copies of his "Golden Legend," the largest

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

book produced by his press, containing 499 folio leaves, with illustrations. Fragments have now, however, been discovered of a "Sarum Legenda," printed for Caxton in Paris by Guillaume Maynyal, who in 1487 produced for Caxton an edition of the "Sarum Missal," and it was probably this service-book, rather than the "Golden Legend" itself, that was left to St. Margaret's Church. How many copies were produced by Caxton of the hundred books which he issued from the sign of the Red Pale it is impossible now to say. A blank leaf of one of the existing copies of his "Dictes and Sayings" bears a note, apparently written by John Bagford,\* to the following effect: "N.B.—Caxton printed 44 books, 25 of which were with Dates, and 19 without." One would imagine, as Blades says, that "so definite a statement must have had some foundation, but it appears to rest on the writer's bare assertion. Some foreign printers issued as many as 275 or 300 copies of editions of the classics, but it is not probable that Caxton ventured on so large an impression, as the demand for his publications must have been much more restricted."

That there was some system of "sale or return" among the booksellers in Caxton's time is evident from the list of Thomas Hunte, stationer of the University of Oxford, which Mr. Madan prints at the end of his edition of the "Day Book of John Dorne." This list is an inventory, written on the fly-leaf of a French translation of Livy (printed at Paris in 1486, and now in the Bodleian Library), recording the books received by Hunte in the year 1483 from Peter Actors† and Joannes de Aquisgrano. These were two foreign stationers settled in London who appear to have travelled about the country in partnership as wholesale booksellers. Hunte gives a written promise faithfully to restore the books or pay the price affixed in the list. Most of the leading stationers of London had their travelling booksellers, if they did not always do the

\* Shoemaker and Biblioclast, 1650-1716.

† Afterwards appointed Stationer to Henry VII. See p. 44.

## TREASURES IN OLD BINDINGS

travelling themselves. Their chief markets were the great fairs, such as that of Stourbridge, which had been as early as the thirteenth century the chief fair in the kingdom. The importance of Stourbridge to booksellers lasted for several centuries after the invention of printing, for it is known to have had its Booksellers' Row as late as 1725. The leading stationers of London in the early days of printing also made a point, whenever possible, of attending the great book-market which was held twice a year at the Frankfort fair. It was here that accounts could be settled and the new books of the world seen. Frankfort, it may here be added, remained the centre of the Continental book trade until after the Thirty Years War in the seventeenth century. It was then gradually superseded by the fair at Leipzig, which has maintained its supremacy ever since.

The dawn of printing brought with it, among other changes, a new form of binding in the shape of paste-boards—layers of waste sheets pasted together—instead of the old solid boards. Fearful as well as wonderful were some of the great tomes of the older style. The covers between which the leaves were fastened were literally wooden boards, as thick as the panel of a door. The wood used was commonly beech: it is from the German word *buche* (beech) that we get our "book." The boards were covered with leather and often beautifully embossed, with elaborate corners, clasps and brass nails on the outside; but they made the book so heavy that, as Erasmus said of Thomas Aquinas's "*Secunda Secundæ*," "No man could carry it about, much less get it into his head."

Paste-boards came into vogue towards the end of the fifteenth century, and were often composed of printed sheets that had been discarded as of no use. Many rare typographical fragments have been brought to light in modern days from the search among the linings of these old bindings. A remarkable find of the kind was made by Blades in the library of the St. Albans Grammar School. Blades was examining a number of volumes in



## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

connexion with his life of Caxton, and pulled out one book which was lying flat upon the top of others. "It was in a most deplorable state, covered thickly with a damp, sticky dust, and with a considerable portion of the back rotted away. The white decay fell in lumps on the floor as the unappreciated volume was opened. It proved to be Geoffrey Chaucer's English translation of '*Boecius de consolacione Philosophiæ*,' printed by Caxton, in the original binding as issued from Caxton's workshop, and uncut! . . . On dissecting the covers they were found to be composed entirely of waste sheets from Caxton's press, two or three being printed on one side only. The two covers yielded no less than fifty-six half-sheets of printed paper, proving the existence of three works from Caxton's press quite unknown before."

Some slight evidence of book prices in England at the beginning of the sixteenth century is afforded in the "Privy Purse Accounts of Elizabeth of York," one entry showing that in 1505 twenty pence were paid for a "Primer" and a "Psalter." Now in 1505, as Charles Knight observes in his life of Caxton, twenty pence would have bought half a load of barley and were equal to six days' work of a labourer. In 1516 "*Fitzherbert's Abridgment*," a large folio law book, then first published, was sold for forty shillings—equal at that time to the cost of three fat oxen. Small wonder, if books fetched such prices as these, that Caxton declared that his works were not for the "rude uplandish man." The printer little dreamt that the "rude uplandish man" was in course of time to become a ruling patron of the press. Already he was making his influence felt on the Continent, thanks very largely to the Papal encouragement of cheapness, but even there he was not yet in sufficient force to warrant the large editions which some printers were induced to place on the market. The result of this is seen in the petition presented to the Pope in 1472 by the two German printers Sweynheim and Pannartz, who had settled in Rome. "We were the first of the Germans," they wrote



## ROME AND THE PRINTING PRESS

—though Ulrich Hahn claims the same distinction—“who, with vast labour and cost, introduced this art into your holiness’s territories; and by our example encouraged other printers to do the same. If you read the catalogue of the works printed by us, you will wonder how and where we could procure a sufficient quantity of paper, or even rags, for such a number of volumes. The total of these books amounts to 12,475—a prodigious heap—and unbearable to us, your Holiness’s printers, by reason of those unsold. We are no longer able to bear the great expense of house-keeping, for want of buyers, of which there cannot be a more flagrant proof than that our house, though otherwise spacious enough, is full of quire-books, but void of every necessary of life.” The immediate result of this appeal is unknown to us, but the fact that Pannartz abandoned printing for the art of engraving in the following year suggests that the Pope’s assistance, if forthcoming at all, was not sufficient for the purpose. Sweynheim, who died some three years later, seems to have continued printing to the end, but not, apparently, with any enthusiasm. Yet the Church is known to have helped its early printers with funds, and long continued to support cheap books for the encouragement of learning among the people, as well as the propagation of works of approved theological teaching. When Leo X., in 1553, granted a privilege to the second Aldus for printing “Varro” he required that the book should be issued in a cheap edition. Gradually, however, as Dr. Putnam points out in his history of “The Censorship of Rome,” it dawned upon the ecclesiastical authorities that there was another side to the shield. The leaders of the Reformation as well as the rulers of the Church had given a warm welcome to the printing press, and were making full use of their new opportunities to spread their doctrines far and wide. Before a hundred years had passed the danger to the Church was met by the promulgation of a special edict prescribing penalties for the reading of heretical or doubtful works. The first Italian list

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

of prohibited books and authors appeared in 1542, and seventeen years later was inaugurated the series of Papal Indexes which has been continued from time to time down to the present generation.

In England—to return to the dawn of printing in this country—the first printers and publishers were not subject to the approving or disapproving nod of the Pope. Caxton, indeed, for his earlier services as “Governor to the English Nation at Bruges” and as secretary or steward to the sister of Edward IV.—Margaret, Duchess of Burgundy—could count on Court influence to support him in his new enterprise. Though never officially appointed “Printer to the King,” he was patronised both by Edward IV. and Richard III., and printed several works under their “protection.” Of the hundred books which were issued from his press before his death in 1491 he was personally responsible for the translation of about twenty-five, besides editing almost every one of them. They were a fine race of men, these followers of Gutenberg and founders of the modern trade—Caxton of Westminster; Froben of Basel and Aldus Manutius of Venice—both publishers for the great Erasmus; the Kobergers of Nuremberg; the Elzevirs of Leyden and Amsterdam; the Estiennes of France; and the house of Plantin of Antwerp—though this last was not established until the middle of the sixteenth century. They took an intellectual and honourable pride in their work which raised their craft above the common ruck. It was a pride which compelled Caxton at once to undertake a new edition when he discovered that he had been deceived into publishing an imperfect text of the “Canterbury Tales”—no very surprising thing when we consider how many transcribers had been at work on the various manuscript copies. Caxton’s own words on the subject are worth quoting, not for this reason alone, but as showing the direct relations existing in those days between the printer-publisher and his customers. “Of which book,” he writes in the second edition :

## OUR FIRST PRINTER-PUBLISHER

So incorrect was one brought to me six years past, which I supposed had been very true and correct, and according to the same I did imprint a certain number of them, which anon were sold to many and divers gentlemen : of whom one gentleman came to me, and said that this book was not according in many places unto the book that Geoffrey Chaucer had made. To whom I answered, that I had made it according to my copy, and by me was nothing added nor diminished. Then he said he knew a book which his father had and much loved, that was very true, and according unto his own first hand by him made; and said more, if I would imprint it again, he would get me the same book for a copy. How be it, he wist well his father would not gladly part from it; to whom I said, in case that he could get me such a book true and correct, that I would at once endeavour me to imprint it again, for to satisfy the author; whereas before by ignorance I erred in hurting and defaming his book in divers places, in setting in some things that he never said nor made, and leaving out many things that he made which are requisite to be set in it. And thus we fell at accord; and he full gently got me of his father the said book, and delivered it to me, by which I have corrected my book.



WILLIAM CAXTON'S DEVICE

BETWEEN THE INITIALS W. AND C. ARE THE FIGURES 74—MARKING THE YEAR 1474—THE FIGURE 4 BEING REPRESENTED, IN ACCORDANCE WITH A COMMON PRACTICE IN THOSE DAYS, BY HALF OF THE FIGURE 8

Caxton has been taken to task by Gibbon for neglecting the classics, but our first printer-publisher knew quite well what he was about. The favourite literature of the age among his chief patrons, the princes and nobility, was the "joyous and pleysaunt romaunce," just as printed service-books were then the need of the clergy, and Caxton, who, as he tells us in "Charles the Great," had now to earn his living by his press, showed his common

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

sense in issuing books for which he knew there was a demand. He realised that the classics could be obtained from abroad in editions which made competition on his part both unnecessary and futile. What he did for us—and for which we cannot be sufficiently grateful—was to produce works of Chaucer, Gower, Lydgate, Thomas Malory, and other gems of pure literature at one of the momentous stages in the development of the English language.

To Caxton we owe the first printed book-advertisement in this country of which we have any knowledge—a little poster not unlike the leaflets of some of our present-day publishers, except that, instead of stating that the work in question—the “*Sarum Ordinale*,” or “*Pica*,” containing the Salisbury order of Church services—could be obtained “of all booksellers,” it invited the reader to come to his office for it:

If it plesse any man spiritual or temporal to bye any pyes of two or three comemoracions of Salisburi use, enpryntid after the forme of this preset [present] lettre whiche ben wel and truly correct, late hym come to Westmonester in to the almonesrye at the reed pale, and he shal have them good chepe.

Below this is a line by itself, appealing to the public not to tear down the bill, and printed, for some unaccountable reason, in Latin: “*Supplico stet cedula*.” Pye, it should be explained, was the English form of the Latin *pica*, or service-book, and the explanation of the term “pyes of two or three comemoracions” accepted by Blades is that a pye of two commemorations contained the rules for Easter and Whitsuntide, and a pye of three commemorations those for Easter, Whitsuntide, and Trinity. We cannot identify the exact site of Caxton’s house at the sign of the Red Pale, in the Almonry, which was close to the Abbey, but, according to Mr. E. Gordon Duff,\* it was probably on some part of the ground covered by the old Westminster Aquarium—now the site of the new Wesleyan-Methodist Hall.

\* “The Printers, Stationers, and Bookbinders of Westminster and London from 1476 to 1535”; Cambridge University Press, 1906.



## FOREIGN COMPETITION

Wynkyn de Worde, the German assistant who inherited Caxton's business, and remained in the same house until 1500, was a craftsman of a very different stamp—"a man," in Mr. Duff's words, "who was merely a mechanic, and who was quite unable to fill the place of Caxton either as an editor or a translator, one who preferred to issue small popular books of a kind to attract the general public rather than the class of book which had hitherto been published from Caxton's house." He described himself, in common with most other makers and sellers of books in London, as a "citizen Stationer." In 1500 he moved to the sign of the Sun, in Fleet Street, renting two houses close to St. Bride's Church and immediately facing the entrance to Shoe Lane. Evidently affairs were prospering with the printer and publisher of popular books. Some years later he had another shop in St. Paul's Churchyard. Probably he had a bookstall in front of his Fleet Street house as well, for this appears to have been a custom of the craft which even the king's printer in those days was not ashamed to follow. St. Paul's Churchyard, however, was already the chief centre of the book trade, not only for London, but for the whole of the country. Many of the more important printers and stationers lived and carried on their business in the main row of houses which surrounded the church. Their smaller brethren, who were forced to have their printing offices elsewhere, and the foreign stationers, who now crowded to England as agents for the Continental printers, seized every available nook and corner for booths and stalls and unpretentious little shops of one story that served as "lock-ups."

The competition of the foreigner with the native printer and stationer led to a Book War more bitter than anything of the sort that we have experienced in modern times. There was much to be said for both sides. The printing press and the book trade developments which sprang immediately from it had made vast strides on the Continent long before they were established in this country. In 1484, when Richard III. passed the Act



## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

which contained a direct encouragement to foreigners to bring their printing and their books to England, there were fifty printers at work in Venice alone, and in Germany, France, and Spain they could be counted by the score. Yet England at this date could only boast of three other presses at work besides Caxton's—that of the Oxford printer whose imprint of 1468 for 1478 threatened at one time to deprive Caxton of his glory as England's first printer; that of the mysterious schoolmaster of St. Albans who printed a few books between 1479 and 1486; and that of John Lettou, the accomplished foreigner who set up the first press in the city of London (1480), four years after Caxton had started at Westminster, and continued for a time in partnership with an inferior Belgian printer named Wilhelmus de Machlinia. Such a limited number of presses could not possibly supply anything like the growing demands of the reading public in England.

There was no English paper-mill, it may be added, until the end of the fifteenth century, the first English printers being dependent for their supplies upon various Continental countries, where the making of paper—introduced originally from the East—had been understood for several centuries. John Tate, afterwards Lord Mayor of London, was the first paper-maker in England, and the first book to be printed on his paper was Bartholomæus' "De Proprietatibus Rerum," published in 1495-96, in which the historic fact is thus quaintly announced :

And John Tate the younger,  
Joy mote he broke,  
Which late hath in England  
Doo make this paper thynne,  
That now in owre Englysshe  
This boke is prynted Inne.

In order to develop the new art of printing and all its accessories, the Act passed in 1484 for regulating the trade of foreigners in England carefully exempted every stationer, scrivener, illuminator, or printer of books, no matter "of what nation or country he be," and gave him

## AN ANGLO-FOREIGN BOOK WAR

full license to sell any books, and to settle within the said realm for the exercise of the said occupation.

This open invitation was readily accepted by Continental craftsmen. England, too, became a sort of dumping-ground not only for classics and educational works printed abroad, but liturgical books, in which the French printers especially excelled. So lucrative did the English trade become that type of English character was employed by many of the printers in the Low Countries, who sent across countless books printed in the vernacular. For half a century there was practically free trade in the English book-market, much to the disgust of the brethren of the Stationers' Company, who, though they did not obtain their charter until 1557,\* dated their corporate existence, as explained on p. 72, from 1403. Unfortunately their guild records up to 1554 are lost, but it is evident that they protected their interests before that time as well as they could. The Government's special encouragement of foreign printers and booksellers was a perpetual and bitter grievance, resulting at times in ugly encounters between the aliens and the hot-blooded English apprentices. The feeling against foreign craftsmen in general culminated in the memorable "Evil May Day" of 1517, when 2000 apprentices and the rougher element of the populace attacked the French and Flemish quarters and sacked the houses. Nearly a score of the ringleaders were afterwards hanged. When the aldermen sought the king's presence to ask pardon for the riot, says Holinshed, his Majesty sternly refused, [saying that although the substantial citizens did not actually take part in the riot, it was evident, from their supineness in putting it down, that they "winked at the matter."

By restricting their trade to St. Paul's Churchyard or within the liberties of St. Martin's or Blackfriars the foreign printers and booksellers who had neither become

\* Not 1556, as stated by most writers on the subject. This point was first cleared up by Mr. E. Gordon Duff in 1905, in his work entitled "A Century of the English Book Trade."

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

naturalised nor had taken out letters of denisation were outside the jurisdiction of the Stationers' Company. Mr. Duff estimates that of all persons living in England connected with the book trade, printers, binders, and stationers, from 1476 to 1535, something like two-thirds were aliens. It was a foreigner, Peter Actors, a native of Savoy, but resident in London, who, in 1485, was appointed Stationer to Henry VII. Actors was succeeded by William Faques, a native of Normandy, who had established himself as a printer in London, and so had the official title altered to that of Printer to the King—the first man to hold that position in England. Faques was followed, on his death, by another Norman, Richard Pynson, knowledge of Norman French probably proving a special recommendation for the post. Richard Pynson, one of the best of the early London printers, suffered, like many other foreigners, from the national prejudice against alien workmen, on one occasion—in 1500—bringing an action in the Star Chamber against Harry Squier and others for leading a murderous attack against himself and his servants, “having made great oaths and promise that there shall neither Frenchman nor Flemming dwell nor abide within the said parish of Seynt Clementes.”\* At other times Pynson deposed that his workmen had been waylaid in Fleet Street, and there “cruellye assaulted, sore bete, and wounded,” and put in such fear and peril of their lives that they durst neither go to church nor out of doors to do their master's business. “For which assaults and menaces the said servants have departed from the said Richarde Pynson and have left righte greate besyneze, which he hath in hande, to be undone, to his greate hurte and utter distrucion.” After that it is not surprising to learn that Pynson removed for better protection from the parish of St. Clement's, which was outside the City, to a house within Temple Bar, “in fletestrete at the sygne of Ye George.” Here, doubtless,

\* “Select Cases in the Star Chamber,” edited for the Selden Society by I. S. Leadam, 1903.



WHEN BOOKS WERE CHAINED  
A FIFTEENTH-CENTURY VOLUME IN THE  
LIBRARY AT GHENT

*From Mr. J. W. Clark's "Care of Books"*





## PROTECTION UNDER HENRY VIII.

he became naturalised before receiving his appointment as Printer to the King. Pynson retained this title on the accession in 1509 of Henry VIII., in whose reign, however, the barriers of protection against foreigners were erected and increased until at length the great bulk of the alien printers, stationers, and binders dwindled away to nothing. Not only were they forced to pay double subsidies, but by an Act of 1523 they were allowed to employ none but English-born apprentices and not more than two foreign workmen, and were placed under the strict rule of the wardens of the Stationers' Company. Six years later (in February 1529) they were further handicapped by a law which enacted "that no stranger artificer not a denizen, who was not a householder the 15 of February last past, shall set up nor kepe any house, shop, or chambre wherein they shall occupy any handycraft within this realm." The climax arrived with the Act which came into operation on Christmas Day 1534, and formally annulled the free trade in books which had existed since the passing of the Act of 1484. The 1534 Act specially concerns printers and binders, but the story of bookselling is so closely interwoven with that of the other departments of the craft—all three branches as often as not in those days being combined in one man—that it is essential to take due note of this measure and mark its effects. The Act is so important that it is worth giving in full:

### AN ACTE FOR PRYNTERS AND BYNDERS OF BOKES \*

Whereas by the provysion of a statute made in the fyrst yere of the reigne of King Richarde the thirde it was provyded in the same Acte that all strangers repairing into this Realme might lawfully bring into the said Realme prynted and wrytten bokes to sell at their libertie and pleasure; by force of which provysion there hath comen into this Realme since the makyn of the same a marveylous nombre of prynted bokes, and dayly doth. And the cause of the makyn of the same provysion seemeth to be, that there were but few bookes and few prynters within this Realme

\* "Statutes of the Realm," vol. iii., 1817.

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

at that tyme which could well exercise and occupie the said science and crafte of prynting. Neverthelesse since the making of the said provysion many of this Realme, being the Kynges naturall subjectes, have given theyme so dylygently to lerne and exercyse the said craft of prynting as [to be] abyll to exercyse the said craft in all poynts as any stranger in any other Realme or Countree. And furthermore, where there be a great number of the Kynges subjects within this Realme which [live] by the crafte and mystery of byndyng of bokes, and that there be a great multytude well expert in the same ; yet all this notwithstanding there are dyvers persons that bryng from [beyond] the See great plentie of pryntyd bokes, not only in the latyn tonge, but also in our maternall Englishe tonge, some bounde in boards, some in lether and some in parchment, and them sell by retayle, whereby many of the Kynges subjects, being bynders of bokes and having none other facultie wherwith to gett their lyvyng, be destitute of worke and lyke to be undor, except some reformation herein be hade. Be it therefore enacted by the Kyng our Sovereigne Lorde, the Lordes spirituall and temporall, and the Comons in this present Parliament assembled, and by authoritie of the same, that the said provyso made the furst yere of the said Kyng Richard the thirde from the feast of the natyvtye of our Lord next comyng shall be voyde and of none effect.

And further be it enacted by the authoritie aforsaid that no person or persons recydant or inhabytaunt within this Realme after the said feast of Cristemas, next comyng, shall bye to sell agayn any prynted bokes brought from any partes out of the Kynges obeysaunce redy bounden in bourdes, lether, or parchment upon payne to lose and forfett for evry boke [bound] out of the said Kynges obeysaunce, and brought into this Realme, and bought by any person or persons within the same to sell agayne contrary to this Acte, 6s. 8d.

And be it further enacted by the authoritie aforesaid that no person or persons inhabytaunte or recydant within this Realme after the said feast of Cristemas shall [buy] within this Realme of any stranger borne out of the Kynges obedyence, other than of denyzens, any maner of prynted bokes brought from any the partes [beyond] the See, except only by engrose [wholesale] and not by retayle, upon payne of forfayture of 6s. 8d. for every boke so bought by retayle contrary to the forme and effecte of this estatute : The said forfaytures to be always levyed of the buyers of any such bokes contrary to this Acte, the one half of all the said forfaytures to be to the use of our Sovereigne Lord the Kyng,

## THE EVIL OF OVERSELLING

and the other moytie to be to the partie that wyll sue for the same in any of the Kynge's Courtes, be it by byll playnt or informocion, wherein the defendaunt shall not be admytted to wage hys lawe, nor no proteccion ne essoynne [nor excuse] shall be unto hym allowed.

Provided alway and be enacted by the authoritie aforesaid that if any of the said prynters or sellers of prynted bokes, inhabyted within this Realme, at any tyme hereafter happen in suche wyse to enhance and encrease the prices of any suche prynted bokes in sale or byndyng at too high and unreasonable pryces, in such wyse as complaynt be made thereof unto the Kynge's Highnes, or unto the Lorde Chauncellor, Lorde Treasurer, or any of the chefe Justices of the one benche or the other that then the said Lorde Chancellor, Lorde Treasurer, and two chefe Justices, or two of any of them, shall have power and authoritie to enquire thereof as well by the oaths of twelve honest and discrete persons as otherwyse by due examynacion by their discrecions; And after the same enhansyng and encresyng of the said pryces of the said bokes and byndyng shalbe so found by the said twelve men, or other ways by examynacion of the said Lorde Chancellor, Lorde Treasurer, and Justices, or two of them at the least, shall have power and authoritie to reforme and redresse suche enhansyng of the pryces of prynted bokes from tyme to tyme by their discrecions, and to lymytt pryces as well of the bokes as for the byndyng of them; and over [beyond] that the offender or offenders thereof being convicte by the examynacion of the same Lorde Chancellor, Lorde Treasurer, and two Justices, or two of them or otherwyse, shall lose and forfeit for every boke by them solde whereof the pryce shalbe enhanced, for the boke or byndyng 3*s.* 4*d.* The one half therof shalbe to the Kynge's Highness and the other half unto the parties greved that wyll complayne upon the same in the maner and forme before rehersed.

Evidently one of the dangers in those days was overselling—just as underselling was the crying evil of the trade in the nineteenth century, until the net system came to its rescue. But the chief object of the Act of 1534—especially the clause prohibiting any but wholesale purchases of foreign books—was as much to prevent the surreptitious importation of heretical writings as to protect the native craftsman. Its chief result, however, was the suppression of the more skilful alien, who, whatever harm he may have done to the pockets of his English brethren,

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

had at least provided them with a healthy stimulus in the new art of printing. "Once our English printing was protected," writes Mr. Duff at the close of his scholarly study of "The Printers, Stationers, and Bookbinders of Westminster and London from 1476 to 1535," "it sank to a level of badness which has lasted, with the exception of a few brilliant experiments, almost down to our own day."

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Nowe let us awhile be imaginous, and hie us backe unto our stationer frendes of London in the yere 1530, while the Kyng's Higness and Mistress Nan are at Hampton Court, busye about theyre grete and unrelgyious cause of matrimonie. We, must needs leave Westmynster alone, for no prynter hath worked a presse there these last thirtie years; for yt was in 1500 exactly that Master Wynkyn de Worde left Master Caxton's house at the Red Pale, and Master Julian Notary, who moved to Kyng Strete to be neare De Worde in 1598, eftsoon followed hym. So mayhap yt were better to start from the shoppe of Master Robert Wyer besyde Charyng Crosse—an honeste and godlye man, who prynteth bokes that neede no greate learning to rede, and ys well respected as churchwardenne of this St. Martyn's parysshe. Here ys his shoppe; mark the holie syne of St. John the Evangelist whyche he hath given it. And nowe let us walk along Strand Strete to the citie, but take heed as ye go, good frende. Yt ys in good soothe, a ryght scandalous shame that the Kyng's highway from the citie to his palyce of Westmynster should remain thus fowle, and so full of ruttes and slough that no man can ryde or dryve along it except at grete payne and jeopardie. On a thicke and mystie night yt ys truly perylous, for the brydges over these watercourses are none too easy to decipher in the dark. No wonder most everybody uses the river. Methynks if the Thames were not so well favoured the Strand Strete would long ere this have been a goodlie road. Mayhap the daye will come when honeste streets will have their turne, and then



## SIXTEENTH-CENTURY LONDON

—who knows ?—Father Thames himself may be neglected. But thys mornyng's sunne makes much amends for all thys rough and ruttie surface, and we're over the worst now. Yonder grete houses on the ryght are the innes of my lords the Bishoppes, coveryng moste of the river side from the citie to Westmynster. I prythie forgive me for not observyng them before—methynks I was gazyng overlong across the fields, whither I was muche temptyd to take yow for a glasse of good browne ale. But we may not tarye yett, orels we shalbe late for our mete and drynke at the Castle, in Flete Strete. Nowe we are arrividde alreadye at the spreadyng suburbe of Temple barre. That shoppe at the signe of St. George, over against the porche of St. Clement's, ys where Master Robert Redman prynted and sold his bokes untill but a fewe weeks agoe, when he took Master Richard Pynson's house at the George in Flete Strete. And that, as mayhap yow have not been enformyd, is the endyng of an importunate dispute betwene these olde ryvals. For Master Pynson called grete shame and rebewke upon Master Redman both for the setting up of the sign of St. George near to his owen, and for the pryntyng of bokes which he was hymselfe sellyng. Master Pynson took it to hearte the more, forasmoche as Master Redman was doing this from the hows whytch was hys owen before the ryoters had dryven hym for safty withyn Temple barre, tho' yt was not Redman who first followed hym there, but Master Julian Notary, who presentlie moved to Paul's Churchyard. Now poore Master Pynson ys dede, and Master Redman takes his crafty revenge by movyng into his hows in Flete Strete. Let us walk through Temple barre gates, and yow will see the shoppe itself over against Dunstan's church, whytche thrusteth itself ryght acrosse the roadway by the corner of Chancery Lane.

Truelie the strete ys marvelous quiet for the tyme of daye. Methynks there must be mischiefe brewing 'mongst some of the 'prentices. Marry! Didst hear



## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

the crye of "Clubs! Clubs!" And see those rascallye 'prentices now levyng their stalls and rushyng oute to answer the call. They durst not refuse an they would. Some poor Frenchemenn going to have their crowns crackt, I trowe—or peradventure yt ys onlie to rescue dyverse other lewde and naughtie 'prentices from punysshement they ryght richlie deserve. But they're all runnyng down Fetter Lane, so we shall not be troubled with their incircumspect devilry.

We shall finde most of our stacioner frendes farther down, close bye the conduit whytch bryngeth sweete water in pipes from Tyborne. That is the Conduit up there, with the stone tower, where St. Christopher and the angels sound the hours on ryght plesant sounding bells. Mynd the ruttes just here; and yt were better to keep on the shadie syde, for yonder open sewer downe the myddle of the strete defyleth the aire when the sunne doth playe upon it. Here we come to the noble signe of Lucrece, whych be the hows of Master Berthelet's, whom the kyng hath just mayde royal prynter in the room of Master Pynson. Many a bynder there be about here, moost especiallie downe Sloe Lane, albeit none can use the new golde toolyng after the Italian fascion so connynglie as good Master Berthelet. But yt ys not onlie on that account, nor for all his fyne pryntyng, that Master Berthelet fyndeth favour with the kyng, for yt was he not long agone who shrewdly sent forth Master Robert Wakefield's crafty book in favour of the kyng's dyvorce. I am enformed he now receiveth an annuitie of fower pounds as his Grace's prynter and bokeseller. He still keepeth hys stall without hys shoppe, yow see, lyke any other stacioner.

But look! here's good Master Wynkyn de Worde comyng from Paul's Churchyarde to his hows here, at the signe of the Sunne. Mark how plumpe and prosperous he waxeth, for in good sooth Master de Worde knoweth what manner of bokes the people wyl bye, and troubleth not overmoche about their qualitie, so that they do sell

## TO PAUL'S CHURCHYARDE

well. Yonder man with hym is hys old assistant, Master Robert Copland, who prynted hys first bokes at Master de Worde's presse, but nowe hath a shoppe of his owen farther down the strete, at the signe of the Rose Garlande. A ryght worthie boke-lover is thys same Master Copland, and a merrie verse-maker to boot.

Over theyre in Bride's Churchyarde ys a younger stacioner's shoppe—one William Restell, who went up to Oxenford, and now talketh of studying the lawe, but nathless hath been started in besness by Master William Restell, his fayther—hymselfe an universitie student, and nowe prynter and brother-in-lawe of the grete Sir Thomas More, hoping moche from hym now that he hath stept into my lord Wolsey's shoes as Lord Chancellor. The only other stacioner I knowe hereabout is Master Lawrence Andrewe, who, lyke goode Master Caxton, can wryte foreyn bokes into Englysshe, as well as prynte them. That be hys shoppe yonder, at the signe of the Golden Crosse, near to Flete brydge, whytch we crosse to pass through Lud Gate. Haste now, good frende, for the aier is full of corrupt vapours over the Dytch, throughe the infamous injection of evyl mucke from the Flete pryson, and other howses along the riverside. Follow me now through the gate; and praye that yow may never get clapped in there for debt, for all those many roomes above are fylled with such disgratious men—dyvers merchants and tradespeople the moste of them. List to that lustie prysoner bawling for charytie at the beggyng gate. Heigho! Here's a grote for him. Mayhap he's some pore devyl of a bokeseller!

And now up Paul's hill to the churchyarde. A place for bokesellyng rather than pryntyng this; and still much in the hands of foreign men, who took the pick of the market long before we Englysshe could stoppe them. Yt was because they took so much trade away that many our owen prynters, who did theyre besness in dyvers other parts of the citie, themselves set up stalls and little shoppes in the same place, even if they took not one of

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

the larger howses round the churchyarde. Thus Master de Worde, who hath so long lyved in England that he hath become practycally an Englysshe citizen, now hath a shoppe here at the signe of Our Ladye of Pity, and was comyng thence, I doubt me not, when I poynted hym out.

Now yow can see how busie yt ys in the churchyarde. Yt ys always crowded lyke thys, wyth boothes and stalls. Those neate lyttle shoppes with the lowe flat roofes, ryght close to the churche walls, belonge to the stacioners who do theyre pryntyng elsewhere or have it done for them. See howe some of their roofs are railed and postyd ; they be all crowded from tyme to tyme when any triumph or show cometh here. But yt were better to show yow the larger byldyngs first. Over besyde the west doore of Paul's, by my lorde of London's palayce, ys where Master Julian Notary dwelt at the signe of the Three Kyngs some years agone—after leavyng the shoppe juste withoute Temple barre. On the east side is Master Francis Birckman's olde shoppe, neare to Dean Colet's grete schole, to the left of Paul's Crosse, where all the preachyng on Sunday afternoons nowadays ys on the wearysome cause of the dyvors,—sometymes for good quene Catherine, sometymes for Nan Bullen and the kyng. Olde Francis Birckman dyde not long agone, and hys sonne hath taken hys place, for the Birckmans were ever a family of stacioners. Mayhap yow have seen their shoppes in other townes when traveling abroad. Didst observe theyre signe of the Fat Henne at Antwerp and Cologne ?

We have dyvers strange signes hereabouts. The shoppe of the "A.B.C." yonder is where Master Richarde Faques, another foreign man, selleth hys bokes, albeit hys dwellyng hows and pryntyng shoppe lyeth in Durhame rents, withoute Temple barre. Yt was thys same Richarde Faques who took over the besnesse left by his late kynsman, William Faques, who was the first man to holde the newe office of prynter to the kyng. Master Richarde, I must

## MASTER HENRY PEPWELL

tell yow, is strangelic incertain as to howe ryghtlie he may spell hys name. Fyrst yt was Fax; then Faques; and presentlie either Fakes or Faukes; and this yeare, I see by bokes, imprynted Fawkes—for methinks he wanteth to seem as Englysshe as possible. Yonder is the signe of Master John Skot, who is lyke to fall into grete shame and rebuke some day for meddlyng with the boke of that evyl-mynded maide, Elizabeth Barton, who calleth herselfe the Nunne of Kente, and raveth 'gainst the kyng's dyvorce. A synfull wench, but puffed up with prayse, in myne opinion, by crafty friars who use her for theyre owne ends.

But let us lynger no more at Master Skot's, for over the waye is the hows of Master Henry Pepwell—a man of weighte and power 'mongst the stacioners, and warden of their worshipful companie five years agone. Master Pepwell was wont to prynt hys owen bokes, but it seemyth that the sellying part payeth best, for nowadays he getteth the moste of his bokes prynted for hym. Mark hys signe of the Trinity—a meet signe for a prynter who hath a many dealyngs with the Churche; for Master Pepwell, yow must know, is the goode frende of Dr. Stokes-laye, our new bishoppe, and giveth him tydyngs betymes, as I am enformed, of any darke and secrete besnesse in prynted heresyas. Hadst been here but the other daye yow might have seen my lorde of London burnying the Englysshe bible of Master Tyndal, whytch in myne opinion was a sorrowful and shameful thyng. And many the booksellers were very lothe to see it, but mayhap yt was largelic done for their especial benefitt, to warne them 'gainst pryntyng and sellying suche bokes. Yt is likelic Master Nicholas Sutton over yonder doth not gretely relyssh Master Pepwell as a neighbour, for Master Sutton, so yt is whisper'd, is shrewdly suspected of being a heretyk, and dealyng secretly in Lutheran bokes.

One other signe I would point out, and that is the St. George, whytch I would have yow marke well, because yt is the shoppe of Master John Reynes, whose byndyng of



## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

myne owen Psalter, whytch I shewed yow in mine hows, with its new-fangled stamped work, pleased yow so moche. Master Reynes is more of a bynder than a bokeseller, though he dealeth in grete nombres of Psalters and Servyce bokes, sharyng editions of these fro' tyme to tyme wyth De Worde and others. And now, good frende, let's haste us back from all thys crowde to Flete strete, to myne worthy hoste of the Castle—my long favourite tavern opposite to Master De Worde's hows—for every tyme I heare these noisy servants of the stacioners callyng, "What d'ye lack! What d'ye lack!" bi the Masse! but I'm straightly remynded that I myghtily lack my dyner.



The full story of the war against Lutheran books, which was largely responsible for the printing clause of the 1534 Act, lies outside our present history, but it is necessary to show how far the free importation of printed works, while it undoubtedly encouraged the development of the new art in England, had also proved an important factor in the progress of the Reformation. "Much light," says Strype, in referring to the Act of 1534 in his "Ecclesiastical Memorials," "was let in among the common people by the New Testament\* and other books in English, which for the most part being printed beyond the sea, were by stealth brought into England, and dispersed here by well-disposed men. For the preventing the importation and using of these books, the King this year issued out a strict proclamation by the petition of the clergy now met in convocation, in the month of December. Nor was this the first time such books were prohibited to be brought in: for as small quantities of them were secretly conveyed into these parts from time to time, for the discovering, in that dark age, the gross papal innovations, as well in the doctrine of the Sacrament as in the image-worship, addressing to

\* The first English New Testament (Tyndale's) was printed in 1525—begun at Cologne and completed at Worms.



## HENRY VIII.'S BOOKSELLER AND PRINTER

Saints, purgatory, pilgrimages and the like, a previous order (in the year 1526) was issued by the Bishop of London, by the instigation of Cardinal Wolsey, calling in all English translations of the Scriptures. And other books of this nature were then forbid."

Strype was evidently unaware of the existence of another royal proclamation, issued in 1530, and printed for the first time, we believe, in the first series of "Notes and Queries." This proclamation was against "blasphemous and pestiferous Englishe bokes, printed in other regions and sent into this realme," as well as that worst crime of all in the Bishop's eyes, "the admission and divulgence of the Olde and Newe Testament translated into English."

The proclamation of 1530, like many others on the same subject, was printed by Thomas Berthelet, who, besides being printer to Henry VIII.—having succeeded to that position on the death of Pynson—was also bookseller and bookbinder to the king. Berthelet's address was in Fleet Street, "nere to ye cundite at ye signe of Lucrece," and the bookstall which he kept outside his shop figured in a lawsuit brought in 1536 for assault on some Frenchmen, one of whom, it was stated, had endeavoured to hide himself under the king's printer's stall.

The selling of prohibited books was too hazardous to tempt the regular bookselling trade—save in a certain number of isolated cases—but there were many illegitimate



THE DEVICE OF THE KING'S  
PRINTER, THOMAS BERTHELET

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

ways and means of smuggling them over, and no lack of enthusiastic reformers willing to run the risk of martyrdom in disseminating them among the people. "Luther's inexhaustible fecundity flowed with a steady stream," writes Froude, "and the printing presses in Germany and in the Free Towns of the Netherlands multiplied Testaments and tracts in hundreds of thousands." It is more than probable, however, that the number of heretical books of foreign origin is much smaller than is commonly supposed, and that many of these so-called foreign books were actually printed in England. "In some cases," remarks Mr. Duff, in the introduction to his "Century of the English Book Trade,"\* "we can only suppose these foreign imprints some mild form of jest, for the books containing them are printed in type and have initials and borders which could not have deceived the youngest apprentice as to their place of origin." Elsewhere he mentions that Upright Hoff of Leipzig and Ian Troost of Zurich are both names assumed by John Oswen, the printer of Ipswich.

The first edition of Tyndale's New Testament, with which the history of our present English Bible begins, was circulated in 1526 by the irregular booksellers already referred to—more especially by the "Christian Brothers," who formed, in Froude's words, the first "Religious Tract Society" in England. Hitherto the Reformers had been dependent on the manuscript translations of the Scriptures, and how eagerly even portions of these were bought up by the people is shown in Foxe's striking passage to the effect that in 1520 "great multitudes . . . tasted and followed the sweetness of God's holy Word almost in as ample manner, for the number of well-disposed hearts, as now. . . . Certes, the fervent zeal of those Christian days seemed much superior to

\* "A Century of the English Book Trade: Short Notices of all the Printers, Stationers, and Bookbinders, and others connected with it, from the Issue of the First Date Book in 1457 to the Incorporation of the Company of Stationers in 1557"; Bibliographical Society, 1905.

## TYNDALE'S NEW TESTAMENT

these our days and times, as manifestly may appear by their sitting up all night in reading and hearing; also by their expenses and charges in buying of books in English, of whom some gave five marks [equal to about £4 in our money], some more, some less, for a book. Some gave a load of hay for a few chapters of St. James or of St. Paul in English. . . . To see their travails, their earnest seekings, their burning zeal, their readings, their watchings, their sweet assemblies . . . may make us now, in these days of free profession, to blush for shame." That was written in 1563, and more than three centuries later, as Bishop Westcott says in reprinting this extract in his "History of the English Bible," the "contrast is still to our sorrow." But it was ever the way of the world to value most that which was hardest to come by.

The secret demand for Tyndale's New Testament was so great that in spite of all the Council's threats and the Bishop's anathemas six editions were exhausted before 1530. Yet so fierce and systematic was the persecution both then and afterwards that Bishop Westcott estimates that of these six editions, numbering perhaps 15,000 copies, there remain of the first one fragment only, which was found in 1834 and is now preserved in the British Museum, of the second edition but two imperfect copies, and of the others two or three specimens which are not satisfactorily identified. The story of the memorable burnings of these works at St. Paul's and at Oxford, at which the prisoners were compelled to do penance by casting their faggots and books into the flames, and of Tyndale's betrayal and martyrdom, is beyond the scope of our narrative, though we shall have more to say presently on the progress of the Battle of the Bible itself.

Some of our brightest side-lights on the regular book trade in England in these early years of the sixteenth century are provided by the "Day-Book of John Dorne," edited for the Oxford Historical Society by Mr. F. Madan in 1885. John Dorne appears to have been a

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

Dutchman who settled in Oxford as a bookseller, and probably acted, apart from his English trade, as agent for a number of enterprising printers on the Continent. In the account-book edited by Mr. Madan we find a methodical record of practically all the books sold by him in the course of the year 1520—an early edition, as it were, of “Book Prices Current.” There is a great preponderance of Latin books, especially in theology and the classics. “A.B.C.’s” are met with repeatedly, but as they rarely fetched more than a halfpenny each—and even at that price thirteen on one occasion were sold “as twelve”—they probably, as Mr. Madan suggests, took the form of a single leaf of parchment or paper. Erasmus appears to have had the largest sale of any author, but Luther was also in considerable demand, the prices realised for his works ranging from threepence to three shillings. One shilling in those days, it may be pointed out, would be worth about twelve of our money. The list of English books, though fewer in number, is even more illuminating. There are penny almanacks, and “prognosticons in Englis” for the same price—the larger ones two for threepence—these answering the same superstitious purposes as the prophecies of Mother Shipton and the more modern “Old Moore.” John Dorne had plenty of customers in his shop for his “balets,” or ballads, which could be had from a halfpenny upwards, and towards the end of the year there is a small run on “kesmes corals,” or Christmas carols, sold as single leaves for a penny, or in two leaves for twopence. “Robert the Devill” could be bought for threepence, “Roben Hod” for twopence, and “The Notbrone Mayde” for a penny. Housewives will be interested to learn that “The Bocke of Kokery” (Cookery) was to be had for fourpence.

Information as to the customs of the trade in London at this period is aggravatingly meagre. The nearest approach to a contemporary account that we possess is the following brief description (reprinted from Professor Arber’s “Transcript”) written by Christopher Barker,



## EARLY ENGLISH BIBLES

the queen's printer, in 1582, the year in which he became warden of the incorporated Stationers' Company: "In the tyme of King Henry the eighte, there were but fewe Printers, and those of good credit and component wealth, at whiche tyme and before, there was another sort of men, that were writers, Lymners of bookes and dyverse thinges for the Churche and other uses called Stacioners; which have, and partly to this daye do use to buy their bookes in grosse [wholesale] of the saide printers, to bynde them up, and sell them in their shops, whereby they well mayntayned their families." The addition of the "saide printers" had greatly strengthened the forces and power of the first fellowship of London stationers, for the whole system of book production and distribution was now in their hands. The ups and downs of religious opinions in the later years of Henry VIII. made it extremely difficult for some of them to steer a safe course, but on the whole they seem to have been singularly astute.

In 1535 came the first complete edition of the English Bible—the work of Miles Coverdale, though the New Testament was based on Tyndale's version. The names of the original publisher and place of printing of Coverdale's Bible remain somewhat of a mystery. But whoever was the printer—and most authorities agree that he was Christopher Froschauer, of Zurich—there is no room for doubting that the edition for sale in England was bought by James Nycolson, or Nicolai, and issued by him at Southwark. Coverdale's Bible, though first published in 1535, was not definitely "set forth with the King's moost gracious licence" until the corrected edition appeared two years later. Then, in 1537, came the English Bible which John Rogers brought out under the name of Thomas Matthew—and has been known as "Matthew's Bible" ever since—combining the labours of Tyndale and Coverdale. This was printed by Jacob von Meteren at Antwerp, where the sheets were bought by Richard Grafton—a member of the Grocers' Company



## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

with strong leanings towards the reformed religion—in association with Edward Whitchurch, a fellow merchant. The rivalry which it created is seen in a letter which Grafton sent to Cromwell before publication with six presentation copies of the newly printed Matthew's edition. The letter is so naïve, and so little known, that we make no apology for printing it in full from Strype's "Memorials of Archbishop Cranmer" (Appendix XX.), 1848 :

Most humbly beseeching your lordship to understand, that according as your commission was, by my servant to send you certain Bibles, so have I now done, desiring your lordship to accept them, as though they were well done. And whereas I writ unto your lordship for a privy seal to be a defence unto the enemies of this Bible, I understand that your lordship's mind is that I shall not need it. But now, most gracious lord, forasmuch as this work hath been brought forth to our most great and costly labours and charges ; which charges amount above the sum of five hundred pounds ; and I have caused of these same to be printed to the sum of fifteen hundred books complete : which now by reason that of many this work is highly commended ; there are that will and doth go about the printing of the same work again in a lesser letter : to the intent that they may sell their little books better cheap than I can sell these great ; and so to make that I shall sell none at all, or else very few, to the utter undoing of me, your orator, and of all those my creditors, that hath been my comforters and helpers therein. And now this work, thus set forth with great study and labours, shall such persons, (moved with a little covetousness to the undoing of others for their own private wealth), take as a thing done to their hands. In which half the charges shall not come to them that hath done to your poor orator. And yet shall not they do it as they find it, but falsify the text ; that I dare say, look how many sentences are in the Bible, even so many faults and errors shall be made therein. For their seeking is not to set it out to God's glory, and to the edifying of Christ's congregation, (but for covetousness). And that may appear by the former Bibles that they have set forth ; which hath neither good paper, letters, ink, nor correction. And even so shall they corrupt this work, and wrap it up after their fashions, and then may they sell it for nought at their pleasures. Yea, and to make it more true than it is, therefore

## GRAFTON'S NAÏVE APPEAL

Dutchmen, living within this realm, go about the printing of it ; which can neither speak good English, nor yet write none. And they will be both the printers and correctors thereof : because of a little covetousness, they will not bestow twenty or forty pounds to a learned man to take pains in it, to have it well done. [Here obviously referring to James Nicholson, or Nicolai, the publisher of Coverdale's Bible, a native of the Low Countries who had settled in Southwark.]

It were therefore, (as your lordship doth evidently perceive) a thing unreasonable to permit or suffer them (which now hath no such business), to enter into the labours of them that hath made both sore trouble and unreasonable charges. And the truth is this, that if it be printed by any other before these be sold, (which I think shall not be these three years at the least), that then am I, your poor orator, undone.

Therefore by your most godly favour, if I may obtain the king's most gracious privilege, that none shall print them till these be sold, which at the least shall not be this three years, your lordship shall not find me unthankful, but that to the uttermost of my power I will consider it. And I dare say that so will my lord of Canterbury, with other my most special friends. And at the last God will look upon your merciful heart, that considereth the undoing of a poor young man. For truly my whole living lieth hereupon. Which if I may have sale of them, not being hindered by any other men, it shall be my making and wealth, and the contrary is my undoing. Therefore most humbly I beseech your lordship to be my helper here, that I may obtain this my request. Or else, if by no means this privilege may be had, (as I have no doubt through your help it shall) ; and seeing men are so desirous to be printing of it again, to my utter undoing as aforesaid : that yet forasmuch as it hath pleased the king's highness to license this work to go abroad ; and that it is the most pure religion, that teacheth all true obedience, and reproveth all schisms and contentions ; and the lack of this word of the Almighty God is the cause of all blindness and superstition : it may therefore be commanded by your lordship, in the name of our most gracious prince, that every curate have one of them, that they may learn to know God and to instruct their parishioners. Yea, and that every abbey should have six, to be laid in six several places ; and that the whole convent, and the resorters thereunto, may have occasion to look on the Lord's law. Yea, I would none other but they of the papistical sort should be compelled to have them. And then I know there should be enough found in my lord of London's diocese to spend away a great part of them.

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

And so should this be a godly act, worthy to be had in remembrance while the world doth stand.

And I know that a small commission will cause my lords of Canterbury, Salisbury and Worcester to cause it to be done through their dioceses. Yea, and this should cease the whole schism and contention that is in the realm; which is, some calling them of the old, and some of the new. Now should we all follow one God, one Book, and one learning. And this is hurtful to no man, but profitable to all men.

I will trouble your lordship no longer, for I am sorry I have troubled you so much. But to make an end I desire your most gracious answer by my servant. For the sickness is about us, or would I wait upon your lordship. And because of coming to your lordship I have not suffered my servant with me since he came over. Thus for your continual preservation, I, with all that truly love God, do most heartily pray that you may overcome all your adversaries of the papistical sort.

Your orator,

RICHARD GRAFTON.

Cromwell's answer has not been traced, but it is evident that Grafton's appeal had not been in vain, for the first edition came out in 1537 "set forth with the King's most gracyous Lycence"; and a letter was sent by the Lord Privy Seal to the bishops in the following year blaming them for their negligence in regard to the English Bible—commanding them to "cause the Bible in English to be laid openly in your own houses; and that the same be in like manner openly laid forth in every parish Church at the charge of the Parsons and Vicars. That every man having free access to it, by reading of the same, may both be the more apt to understand the declaration of it at the Preacher's mouth, and also the more able to teach and instruct his wife, children and family at home." \* In 1538 Grafton and Whitchurch were also entrusted with the preparation of the Great Bible, and compensated for their outlay on the translation which that edition superseded.

Another new translation which suffered through the

\* "Ecclesiastical Memorials," Strype, 1824.

## ADVENTURES OF THE GREAT BIBLE

publication of the Great Bible was that of Richard Taverner, "printed at London by John Byddell for Thomas Barthlet" (*sic*), and issued, like the larger work, in 1539. Taverner's Bible was only once reprinted. In November 1539, while Grafton was preparing the Great Bible, Cromwell received letters patent from the king wherein, "for the diversity of translations," his Majesty appointed Cromwell "to take special care that no manner of person should attempt to print any Bible in the English tongue of any volume during the space of five years, but only such as should be deputed by the said Lord Cromwell." \*

The Great Bible itself was printed (under Coverdale's direct supervision) in Paris—for the reason, according to Strype and Henry's letters on the subject to the French king, that "better paper and cheaper" was to be had there than in London, "and cheaper and more dexterous workmen." Grafton and Whitchurch were largely financed in this undertaking by Anthony Marler, a wealthy member of the Haberdashers' Company; and Grafton, at least, was in Paris with Coverdale while the printing was being done at the press of Francis Regnault. All went well until the text was on the point of completion, when the Inquisitor-General for France stepped in and not only stopped all further progress, but forbade the removal of the sheets already printed. Luckily both Coverdale and Grafton succeeded in escaping, and, stealing back to Paris shortly afterwards, managed to buy up the whole plant and remove it to London—presses, type, and workmen as well. They even rescued "four dry-vats full" of the prohibited sheets, which the authorities had sold as waste-paper to a local tradesman, the remainder having been burnt in Maubert Place as heretical books. The interference of the Inquisition, therefore, was really a blessing in disguise, for with all the necessary material safely established in London there was nothing now to prevent the printing of as many copies as were wanted.

\* "Ecclesiastical Memorials," Strype, 1824.



## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

The Reformation must have seriously disturbed the regular bookselling trade. Hardly any one ventured to publish story-books, and even educational works were at a discount. The "Summary Declaration of the Faith, Uses and Observances in England," dated 1539,\* tells us that "Englishmen have now in hand in every Church and place, almost every man, the Holy Bible and New Testament in their mother tongue, instead of the old fabulous and fantastical books of the 'Table Round,' 'Launcelot du Lac,' 'Huon de Bourdeaux,' 'Bevy of Hampton,' 'Guy of Warwick,' &c., and such other, whose impure filth and vain fabulosity the light of God has abolished utterly."

The freedom of the Scriptures, however, was soon restricted. With the Catholic reaction and the execution of Cromwell in 1540, the publishers of the Bible found themselves in anything but an enviable position. The bishops complained to the king of the notes which had been added to certain of the Bibles in English, and, repenting also of ever having sanctioned the Great Bible, proceeded to undo and proscribe much of the work in this direction which had been done under Cromwell's auspices. The free use of the Scriptures, they urged, had been responsible for all the heresies which had taken such deep root in Germany, and spread thence so dangerously into England. Grafton especially seems now to have fallen into disfavour, for he was rash enough, soon after Cromwell's death, to publish a "ballade" in his patron's praise. Conflicting accounts are given of the origin and upshot of this incident, but Burnet's version, which we are inclined to accept, is to the effect that "Audley, the Chancellor, was Grafton's friend, and brought him off." According to Strype and Foxe, however, he fell into more serious trouble not long afterwards for his share in the production of the now prohibited Matthew's Bible, "which he, being timorous,"

\* Collier's "Ecclesiastical History of England," 1708-14, vol. ii., "Collection of Records," No. 47.



## THE GREAT BIBLE

says Strype, "made excuses for." Then he was examined about the Great Bible, and the notes that he was charged with intending to add thereto. "He replied that he added none to his Bible, when he perceived the King and clergy not willing to have any. Yet Grafton was sent to the Fleet, and there remanded six weeks, and before he came out was bound in three hundred pounds that he should neither sell nor imprint any more Bibles till the King and the clergy should agree upon a translation."

The situation was deplorable for those who were pecuniarily interested in the Bible trade. Early in 1541 Anthony Marler, the haberdasher, who had largely financed the Great Bible, presented a petition to the Privy Council pointing out that he would be ruined unless his Bibles were sold, and praying for a proclamation that every church still unprovided with it should purchase one, according to the king's former injunction. It was thereupon agreed "that there should be such a proclamation, and that the day limited for having the said book should be Hallow Mass." \* The Privy Council had already fixed the price at 10s. for unbound copies and 12s. for copies stitched and bound. The proclamation, which was issued on May 6, 1541, confirmed the injunctions heretofore set forth by which the king "intended his subjects to read the Bible for their instruction humbly and reverently; not reading aloud in time of Holy Mass, or other divine service, nor, being laymen, arguing thereupon. Many towns and parishes having failed to accomplish this, they are straightly commanded, before All Saints' Day next, to provide and set up Bibles of the largest volume, upon penalty of 40s. for every month's delay after All Saints' Day, half to go to the informer. The sellers of such Bibles are taxed to charge for them not above 10s. for Bibles unbound, or 12s. for Bibles well bound and clasped." † On March 11 of the

\* "Letters and Papers of the Reign of Henry VIII.," vol. 16, May 1, 1541.

† *Ibid.*, vol. 16, May 6, 1541.

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

following year, as may also be seen in the "Letters and Papers of Henry VIII.," Marler further succeeded in obtaining a patent appointing him "sole authority to print the Bible in English during the space of four years next ensuing."

The authorities further tightened their hold over the press in this year of 1542 by issuing a proclamation which, in addition to forbidding any one, after the ensuing August 31, to "receive or keep the text of Tyndale's or Coverdale's translation of the New Testament, nor any other than is permitted by the Act of Parliament made," declared that henceforth no printer was to issue "any English book, ballad or play, without putting his name and the name of the author and day of the print; and the printer shall present the first copy to the mayor of the town where he dwells two days before allowing any other copy to leave his hands. From the day of this proclamation no person shall bring into the realm any English book printed beyond sea concerning Christian religion, nor shall sell any English book printed beyond sea without the King's special license." \*

On turning up this proclamation we discovered a most interesting fact in connexion with the history of the Stationers' Company itself. The dearth of records before the royal incorporation under Mary I. has been frequently remarked upon, but no writer on the subject, so far as we know, has ever mentioned that the company applied for a charter in the reign of Henry VIII. The fact is revealed in the seventeenth volume of the "Letters and Papers of the Reign of Henry VIII.," edited by Dr. Gairdner (1900). In an account of the proceedings of the Convocation of Canterbury dated March 17, 1542, there appears the bald statement to the effect that "the Prolocutor exhibited a book in parliament for the incorporation of the Stationers, to be referred to the King." That is all. And it is impossible now, unfortunately, to say what happened. Perhaps the king,

\* "Letters and Papers of the Reign of Henry VIII.," vol. 17, March 1542.

## STATIONERS AND THE REFORMATION

who had beheaded his fifth queen only a month previously, was too busy seeking a sixth wife to be bothered about such a trifle as a charter for London's stationers; but, whatever happened to the application, we know that the stationers had to wait another fifteen years for their incorporation. It is significant that on both occasions when they applied for this the Catholics were doing their utmost to stem the rising tide of the Reformation. Either the leanings of the stationers were on the side of the Catholics, or they stifled whatever religious convictions they may have possessed in order to seize the best opportunity for increasing the power and importance of their craft. For, as a long-established civic guild, they were strong enough already to be invaluable to the authorities in their crusade against prohibited books; and naturally it was as much to their advantage as to the ecclesiastical authorities' to suppress the lawless bookseller.

Henry Pepwell, who died in 1541, and was warden of this early guild of stationers in 1525-26, sharing that honour with Lewis Sutton, is known to have been an ardent Catholic, and to have lent considerable personal assistance to the authorities in this matter. On one occasion he went as far as St. Albans, with two other stationers of London—Henry Tab and William Bonham—to inquire into the printing there of a seditious book complained of by the abbot, Richard Stevenage. Tab died in 1548, and doubtless, therefore, had a share in the company's application of 1542, together with Bonham, who lived to become one of the original members at the incorporation in 1557, though he died almost immediately afterwards. A more conspicuous Catholic than any of these, however, was Pepwell's friend, Thomas Dockwray, a public notary as well as stationer, who was long employed by Bishop Stokesley in the same crusade, both at home and abroad. He held the office of master when the company made its successful application for incorporation under Mary.

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

For all this zeal in the closing years of Henry VIII., the number of prohibited books still circulated in England caused increasing alarm to the authorities. In April 1543 proceedings were taken against eight printers, including Grafton and Whitchurch, and twenty-five booksellers, for issuing unlawful books. Each of the prisoners was compelled to send in a true list of all the books and ballads he had bought and sold during the three preceding years—lists which, unfortunately, cannot now be traced. This fresh disgrace was the more unfortunate for Grafton and Whitchurch for, only three months previously—on January 23—having regained the fickle favour of the authorities, they had received the exclusive privilege of printing all the Church service-books, “for Sarum use,” within the king’s dominions for seven years. Most of the prisoners on the present occasion were released in a fortnight, but Whitchurch and Grafton were detained for nearly a month. Further restrictions against the Bible were imposed in 1543. For, declared Parliament in that year :

The King’s Majestie of his moste gracious and blessed dispoſſicon hathe heretofore caused to be set forthe the Byble and New Testament in the Englishe tongue to be read by his loving subjects, to the intent that they might therbye the better know their duetie to Almighty God and to his Majestie, and also increase in vertue for the wealthe of theyre soules, albeit his Majestie’s said moste godlye purpose and intent hath taken good effect among a great multytude of his subjects, moste speciallie among the highest and moste honest sorte, according to his Highnes’ good expectacion thereof, yet forasmuche as his Highnes perceyveth that a great multitude of his saide subjects, moste speciallie of the lower sorte, have so abused the same that they have therebye growen and increased in divers naughtie and erronyous opynions, and by occasion thereof fallen into greate dyvision and discencon among themselves, to the great unquietnes of the Realme and other his Majestie’s Dominions. For remedye thereof be it enacted by the authoritie aforesaide that from and after the first daie of Julye next cooming, no woomen nor artificers prentises, journeymen, serving men of the degrees of yeomen and under, husbandemen nor laborers, shall reade within this Realme, or



## UNDER EDWARD VI.

in any other the King's Domynons, the Byble or Newe Testament in Englishe, to himselfe or any other, pryvatelie or openlie, upon paine of oone monethe's imprysonement for every tyme [of so] offending contrarye to this Acte, and being therof convicte in suche maner and forme as is aforesaide; oonelesse the King's Majestie, our saide Sovereigne Lorde King Henry, perceyving such reformation and amendement in theyre lyves and behaviour, by the diligent and discrete reading and imprynting in theyre hartes of the moste blessed doctryne set forth, or hereafter to be set forth, by his saide Majestie, shall of his clemencye thinke good otherwyse to enlardge and give libertie for the reading of the same.\*

The Reformation remained in this state of reaction when Henry VIII. died (1547). The English Bible at once leaped into power again, and in the few short years of Edward VI.'s reign there were published no fewer than thirteen or fourteen editions of the complete Book, as well as thirty-five Testaments. "In King Edward the sixt his Dayes"—to come back to Christopher Barker's account—"Printers and printing began greatly to increase: but the provision of letter [type], and many other thinges belonging to printing, was so exceeding chargeable that most of those printers were dryven throughe necessitie to compound before[hand] with the booksellers at so lowe value, as the printers themselves were most tymes small gayners, and often losers." The trade at this time was busy not only with the English Bible, but with the new Prayer-book. The printer and publisher of this was Richard Grafton, who, rewarded at length for his leanings towards the Reformation, was appointed King's Printer on the accession of Edward, and held that post throughout the reign. When the first English Prayer-book of Edward VI. was published in 1549 all the old service-books had to be destroyed; and on August 13 of the same year proclamations were issued by the Privy Council ordering that from henceforth no printer should print or "putt to vente" any English book "but such as should first be examined by

\* "Statutes of the Realm," vol. iii., 1817: 34 & 35 Henry VIII., cap. 1.



## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

Mr. Secretary Peter, Mr. Secretary Smith, and Mr. Cecil, or the one of them, and allowed by the same." This Mr. Cecil was the future Lord Burghley, now the Protector Somerset's secretary and right hand, and already in the Princess Elizabeth's confidence. Not many weeks after this proclamation the Protector was arrested by Warwick, and Cecil discreetly withdrew from public life—to reappear in the following year as Secretary of State under Somerset's rival. Those booksellers who conformed as often as was necessary for their safety were not more pliable than the great Lord Burghley.

With the swing of the pendulum which brought in the reign of Mary I. on the death of Edward VI. in 1553 came yet another reaction, the full force of which must have been felt by the booksellers at once, well stocked as they were with English Bibles and other literary products of the Reformation. For though the royal proclamation issued on July 19—after Mary had defeated the machinations of Northumberland and the reign of his unhappy "nine days' queen" had come to a close—assured her "loving subjects" that in taking Mary "for their liege sovereign Lady and Queen they should find her as benign and gracious a lady as others her most noble progenitors had been," there were ominous signs that must have made some of the booksellers at least change the complexion of their stock-in-trade as quickly as they could. Grafton, who printed this proclamation of the queen's accession, had also issued the similar announcement of poor Jane Grey, and for this, as well as for having printed the Bible in English and other Protestant books, he was at once deprived of his office as Royal Printer, John Cawood being appointed in his stead. "Nor was this all her measure he found," remarks Strype, "for in the next month he was clapped up in prison." Whitchurch was also imprisoned for his share in the production of the English Bible, and they were both exempted from the pardon proclaimed by Mary at

## “AN EVIL ZEAL FOR LUCRE”

her coronation.\* Prebendary Rogers, whose edition of the Scriptures they had published in 1537 under the name of “Matthew’s Bible,” was summoned on August 16 before the Council as “John Rogers, alias Matthew,” and eighteen months later suffered at the stake at Smithfield as the first victim of the Marian persecutions. Coverdale, more fortunate, succeeded in escaping to the Continent. On August 18, 1553, a proclamation was issued which showed the book trade clearly what it had to expect from the new rule :

Forasmuch as it is well known that seditious and false rumours have been nourished and maintained in this realm by the subtilty and malice of some evil disposed persons . . . and printing of false found Books and Ballads, Rimes, and other Treatises in the English tongue, containing doctrine in matters now in question, and controversies touching the high points and mysteries in Christian religion ; which Books, Ballads, Rimes, and Treatises are chiefly by the Printers and Stationers set out to sell to her Grace’s subjects of an evil zeal for lucre and covetousness of vile gain ; her Highness therefore straightly chargeth and commandeth all and every of her said subjects . . . that none of them from henceforth print any Book, Matter, Ballad, Rime, Interlude, Process, or Treatise . . . except they have her grace’s special license in writing for the same, upon pain of incurring her Highness’ indignation and displeasure.†

The English Bible, strangely enough, does not seem to have figured in any special measure for its destruction in Mary’s reign. No new edition was permitted, and public copies found in churches were burnt, but no injunctions appear to have been issued against its private use. And in spite of the strict regulations of the Crown,

\* Grafton and Whitchurch practically retired from business on their release later in the year. Whitchurch married the widow of Archbishop Cranmer, and died in 1562. Grafton, who, among his general works, had issued this year Wilson’s “Arte of Rhetorique,” lived eleven years later, becoming twice M.P. for London and subsequently (1562–63) Member for Coventry. Much of his later life he spent as a rival of John Stow in the compilation of English “Chronicles,” and, like Stow, is said to have died in very needy circumstances.

† Collier’s “Ecclesiastical History,” 1708–14, “Records,” No. 58.

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

the scattered army of Reformers on the Continent still saw to it that England was well supplied with "seditious and heretical" literature. In June 1555 it was found necessary to issue a further proclamation authorising the warden of every company in London to search for such books as had either been smuggled over from the Continent or secretly printed in England. Another proclamation was issued at the same time against the service-books of Edward VI. The campaign of seditious literature went steadily on, increasing in virulence as the time drew near for the Spanish marriage. Parliament now issued an order against the circulation of any book to the slander of the king or queen under penalty of the loss of the right hand. And after the marriage there still seemed urgent need for further powers of repression. It was a ripe moment for the London stationers again to demand the royal charter, to which they had long considered themselves entitled. Philip and Mary, as they listened to the prayer for incorporation, saw in it a means of obtaining further control over the all-powerful and obnoxious printing press, and it was for this reason, more than anything else, that the charter of May 4, 1557, was granted.

That Mary and Philip hoped to make effective use of the newly incorporated company in suppressing seditious and heretical books is clear from the preamble of the charter, the full text of which will be found among our appendices. The government of the "community of the said mistery or art" was vested in one master and two keepers, or wardens; and no person within the realm was permitted to print anything for sale within the kingdom unless he belonged to the company or held some license by letters patent from the Crown. Furthermore, the master and wardens were empowered "to make search whenever it shall please them in any place, shop, house, chamber, or building of any printer or bookseller whatever within our kingdom of England or the dominions of the same, for any books or things

## THE DISILLUSIONED QUEEN

printed, or to be printed, and to seize, take, hold, burn, or turn to the proper use of the foresaid community, all and several those books and things which are or shall be printed contrary to the form of any statute, act, or proclamation, made or to be made." The pains and penalties for breaking these regulations, or hindering the officers in the course of their duties, were three months' imprisonment for each offence, and a fine of "a hundred shillings of lawful money of England, one half thereof to us, the heirs and successors of the foresaid Queen, and the other half thereof to the foresaid Master, Keepers or Wardens and community." Flushed with its new importance, there can be little doubt that the company used its powers with no half-hearted zeal, especially as the first master, Thomas Dockwray, was himself an ardent Catholic. Dockwray did not long survive his new honour, for he died in the first year of Elizabeth's reign. Meantime the war against heresy and heretical books was pursued by Mary with fanatical energy. The company might keep the regular trade under its drastic rule, but nothing could stop the ceaseless flow of surreptitious literature during the two and a half years of bitter disillusionment which the unhappy Mary had still to live. To what extreme lengths the forsaken queen was prepared to go in the last six months of her life is seen in the following proclamation, dated June 5, 1558, while Philip, who had dragged this country into his conflict with France, and had already lost Calais for England, was absent on the Continent :

Whereas divers books filled both with heresy, sedition and treason have of late and be daily brought into this realme out of foreign countries and places beyond the seas, and some also covertly printed within this Realme, and cast abroad in sundry parts thereof, whereby not only God is dishonoured, but also an encouragement given to disobey lawful princes and governors. The King and Queen's Majesties for redresse hereof, by this their present proclamation, declare and publish to all their subjects that whosoever shall after the proclaiming hereof be found to have any of the said wicked and seditious books, or,



## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

finding them, do not forthwith burn the same, without showing or reading the same to any other person, shall in that case be reputed and taken for a rebell, and shall without delay be executed for that offence according to the order of Marshall lawe.\*

It is curious that Robert Caley, the most prominent printer on the Catholic side, was not at this time a member of the Stationers' Company ; nor did his religious fervour save him, in the year of incorporation, from being fined for printing without a license. Mary's death put an end to Caley's press, yet this was the very time that he chose to take the freedom of the company. Perhaps he cherished the hope that Elizabeth meant to make no drastic change, and that in course of time it might be safe for him to start afresh. If so, the gradual triumph of the Réformation must have shattered his hopes, for we hear of no more books issuing from Caley's press.

\* Arber's "Transcript of the Stationers' Registers."



RICHARD GRAFTON'S PUNNING  
DEVICE



## CHAPTER FOUR : THE BOOK TRADE UNDER QUEEN ELIZABETH

THE momentous event which stopped the Catholic printer from issuing any more books also brought back John Day, the distinguished printer and bookseller, who was as ardent a disciple of the Reformation as was Caley of the older faith. John Day was destined to play a leading part in the book world of Elizabeth's reign. He was born at Dunwich, in 1522, and started printing in 1546, moving, after a few years of partnership with William Seres,\* to the old city gate called Alders Gate. "John Day, Stationer, a late famous printer of many good books," says Stow in his "Survey," "in our time dwelled in this Gate, and builded much upon the wall of the citie, towards the parish church of St. Anne." Apparently he joined the Stationers' Company from the Stringers' in the following year, but ceased printing when Mary, in the exciting summer of 1553, became the first queen regnant of England. Day seems to have withdrawn to Norfolk at this time, for a note in "Machyn's Diary" proves that he was brought thence with his servant, together with a priest and another printer, and sent to the Tower for printing "noythy bokes." Whether these were books issued in Edward's time or surreptitious productions of the new reign it is impossible to say, and we have no means now of learning how long he remained a prisoner. According to the "Dictionary of National Biography"

\* William Seres afterwards joined partnership for a time with the printer and translator Anthony Scoloker, and in 1554 received letters patent for the printing of psalters, primers, and prayer-books. This privilege he lost on the accession of Mary, when he seems to have sought safety on the Continent, but it was renewed by Queen Elizabeth. In his old age he assigned his business for a yearly rental to Henry Denham, another worthy of the Elizabethan book trade, who became a member of the Stationers' Company in 1560. Seres lived to be master of the same company for several years in succession, and died about 1579.

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

and other authorities, he fled abroad after his release, but if this were so he could not have been absent long, as he was included among the original members of the incorporated company in the charter granted by Philip and Mary in 1557. After Elizabeth's accession he was rewarded for his services and sufferings in the Reformers' cause by a large share of patronage from the leaders of that party, becoming, as will presently be seen, the printer and publisher of the works of Bishop Latimer, Archbishop Parker, and Foxe, the martyrologist.

Twelve months after her accession Elizabeth—to return for the moment to the story of the Stationers' Company—confirmed the charter granted by “Lord Philip King and Lady Mary, late Queen of England, our dearest sister.” This was succeeded by the formal creation of the stationers as a livery company on February 1, 1560, by the Lord Mayor of London. The origin of the ecclesiastical licensing of books which now followed, and hampered the trade for many years, is seen in the “Injunctions given by her Majestie”—issued in the first year of Elizabeth's reign—which Prof. Arber, in quoting the more important of the items in his “Transcript of the Stationers' Registers,” regards as the earliest printed notice of the company in existence. One of these “Injunctions” ordered the clergy, as in Cromwell's time, to provide each parish within three months with a copy of the English Bible of the largest volume. Later they were also enjoined to set up in some convenient place within the said church “the ‘Paraphrases of Erasmus,’ also in English, ‘upon the Gospelles.’” Another important injunction, reminiscent, like the last, of the ecclesiastical proclamations under Henry VIII., was to the following effect :

Because there is a great abuse in the printers of books, which for covetousness chiefly regard not what they print, so they may have gain, whereby ariseth great disorder by publication of unfruitful, vain and infamous books and papers : the Queen's Majesty straightly chargeth and commandeth that no manner of person

## ECCLESIASTICAL CENSORSHIP OF BOOKS

shall print any manner of book or paper, of what sort, nature, or language soever it be, except the same be first licensed by her majesty by express words in writing, or by six of her Privy Council, or be perused and licensed by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, the Bishop of London, the Chancellors of the Universities, the Bishop being ordinary ecclesiastical judge as well, and the Archdeacon also of the place where any such shall be printed, or by any two of them, whereof the ordinary of the place to be always one. And that the names of such as shall allow the same be added in the end of every such work, for a testimony of the allowance thereof. And because many pamphlets, plays, and ballads be oftentimes printed, wherein regard would be had that nothing therein should be either heretical, seditious, or unseemly for Christian ears, her Majesty likewise commandeth that no manner of person shall enterprise to print any such, except the same be to him licensed by such her Majesty's commissioners, or three of them, as be appointed in the city of London, to hear and determine divers causes ecclesiastical, tending to the execution of certain statutes, made the last parliament, for uniformity of order of religion. And if any shall sell, or utter, any manner of books or papers, being not licensed as above said: the same party shall be punished by order of the said commissioners, as the quality of the fault shall be thought meet. And touching all other books of matters of religion, or policy, or governance, that hath been printed, either on this side of the seas, or on the other, because the diversity of them is great, and there needeth good consideration to be had of the particularities thereof: her Majesty referreth the prohibition, or permission thereof, to the order which her said commissioners within the city of London shall take and notify. According to which, her majesty straightly commandeth all manner her subjects, and specially the wardens and company of Stationers, to be obedient. Provided that these orders do not extend to any profane [classical] authors, and works in any language that hath been heretofore commonly received or allowed in any the universities or schools: But the same may be printed and used, as by good order they are accustomed.

Several editions of these injunctions were issued before the confirmation of the company's charter by Elizabeth in November 1559. The above order as to the official licensing of every book published was never observed with any strictness, the licensing being left more often to the Stationers' Company, the officers of which,

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

however, were always made to keep in their hearts the fear of the higher powers. The earliest order of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners which has been preserved by the company is dated the following year, when the master and wardens were directed to prevent certain persons from printing the primers and psalters in English which had been licensed to privileged printers. Shortly after this we find the first record of an order relating to the entering of copies in the company's registers—a rule which played an increasingly important part in the securing of copyright, for all members were now required to enter the title of any book which they regarded as their particular property, a fee being charged for each entry. A copy of the book had to be deposited for the purpose; and it is interesting to find in Prof. Arber's "Transcript" certain entries from which it is clear that the "copyright copies" which now have to be presented by the publishers to the five principal libraries in the kingdom were, in Elizabeth's reign at least, sold from time to time for the general benefit of the company. Books printed under special privilege or State monopoly were exempt from registration, but otherwise every book published had to be entered in the company's records—with the result that the Stationers' Registers now form a record of contemporary literature which, though not complete, is of supreme bibliographical value.

We have not long to wait in the new queen's reign before we meet with a touch of the real Elizabeth in her dealings with the stationers. It was a time of much royal wooing, for the number of Elizabeth's suitors, both among foreign princes and her own subjects, was legion. And when, in 1560, she went so far as to accept the preliminary gifts of the handsome King Eric of Sweden the matter was regarded by many people as a settled thing. The result was that the more enterprising stationers—eager as any pictorial publisher of the present day—promptly issued portraits of the happy couple united. Whereupon they were gravely admonished by



## PROHIBITED PORTRAITS OF ELIZABETH

the Queen's Secretary of State, Sir William Cecil, afterwards the great Lord Burghley, in the following letter which he wrote to the Lord Mayor :

It may please your lordship, the Queen's majesty understands that certain bookbinders and stationers do utter certain papers, wherein be printed the face of her Majesty and the King of Sweden ; and although her highness is not miscontented that either her own face or the said King's should be printed or portraited, yet to be joined in the same paper with the said King, or with any other prince that is known to have made any request for marriage to her Majesty, is not to be allowed. And therefore her Majesty's pleasure is that your lordship should send for the wardens of the stationers ; or for the wardens of any other men that have such papers to sell, and to take order with them, that all such papers be taken and packed up together in such sort that none be permitted to be seen in any part. For otherwise her majesty might seem touched in honour by her own subjects, that would in such papers declare an allowance to have herself joined, as it were, in marriage with the said King, where, indeed, her majesty hitherto cannot be induced (whereof we have cause to sorrow) to allow of marriage with any manner of person.\*

A few years later the vanity of the queen was tried so sorely by the wide circulation of ill-favoured likenesses of her Majesty that Cecil was forced to draw up a more energetic proclamation on the subject. The document is worth giving in full :

Forasmuch as through the natural desire that all sorts of subjects had to procure the portrait and likeness of the queen's majesty, great numbers of painters, and some printers and gravers, had and did daily attempt in divers manners to make portraitures of her, wherein none hitherto had sufficiently expressed the natural representation of her majesty's person, favour, or grace ; but had for the most part erred therein, whereof daily complaints were made amongst her loving subjects,—that for the redress hereof her majesty had been so importunately sued unto by the lords of her council and other of her nobility, not only to be content that some special cunning painter might be permitted by access to her majesty to take the natural representation of her, whereof she had been always of her own right disposition very unwilling,

\* Haynes's "State Papers," 1740.



## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

but also to prohibit all manner of other persons to draw, paint, grave, or portrait her personage or visage for a time, until there were some perfect pattern or example to be followed :

Therefore her majesty, being herein as it were overcome with the continual requests of so many of her nobility and lords, whom she could not well deny, was pleased that some cunning person should shortly make a portrait of her person or visage to be participated to others for the comfort of her loving subjects ; and furthermore commanded, that till this should be finished, all other persons should abstain from making any representations of her ; that afterwards her majesty would be content that all other painters, printers, or gravers, that should be known men of understanding, and so therein licensed by the head officers of the places where they should dwell (as reason it was that every person should not without consideration attempt the same), might at their pleasure follow the said pattern or first portraiture. And for that her majesty perceived a great number of her loving subjects to be much grieved with the errors and deformities herein committed, she straightly charged her officers and ministers to see to the observation of this proclamation, and in the meantime to forbid the showing or publication of such as were apparently deformed, until they should be reformed which were reformable.\*

Elizabeth did not deprive John Cawood of his official post as royal printer to which he had been appointed by Mary, in succession to Richard Grafton, in 1553, at a salary of £6 13s. 4d., but she made him share the office with Richard Jugge. It was Jugge who published the first edition of the "Bishops' Bible" in 1568, between which date and 1574 he was four times appointed master of the Stationers' Company. John Cawood was, in his turn, three times master of the company, and took a deep interest in its affairs to the end of his life.

But let us return to Master John Day, whose story helps us better than any other to realise the new era which was beginning for the book trade with the coming of "Great Eliza." Day himself strikes the keynote of that epoch in his trade device, the design of which represents the rising sun, and a boy awakening his sleeping

\* "Archæologia," Society of Antiquaries, vol. ii.

## JOHN DAY'S PUNNING DEVICE



companion with the words "Arise, for it is Day"—a double allusion to the printer's name and to the dawn of the Reformation. John Foxe, who published the first (Latin) part of his "History of the Acts and Monuments of the Church"—popularly known as Foxe's "Book of Martyrs"—at Strasburg in 1554, while seeking safety on the Continent during the Marian persecutions, issued the first English edition through John Day in 1563. Anthony à Wood tells us that on his return to England he was handsomely entertained at the Duke of Norfolk's "Manor place called Christ Church"—the Duke having been one of Foxe's pupils—and "from that house he traversed weekly every Monday to the house of John Day the printer, to consummate his Acts and Monuments of the Church, and other works in English and Latin." The Catholic view of these proceedings and of the value of Foxe's work may be seen in a contemporary "squib" which was communicated to Dibdin from the blank leaf at the end of a manuscript of the "Pricke of Conscience" in the Bodleian Library :

The grave counsell of Gravesend barge  
 Giveth John Day a privilege large,  
 To put this in print for his gaynes,  
 Because in the "Legende of Lyes" he taketh paynes ;  
 Commanding other upon payne of slavery  
 That none prynt thys but John Day the prynter of  
*Foxe his Knavery.*

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

Day issued four folio editions of the "Acts and Monuments" in his lifetime, and was also associated with Foxe in other undertakings, the martyrologist probably acting for him as one of the learned correctors of the press who were then employed by the leading publishers of the time. Foxe had been so employed during his exile on the Continent, when he served as reader of the press to Oporinus (Herbst), who published his "Christus Triumphans" in 1556. Thanks to the patronage of that scholarly churchman and true booklover Archbishop Parker, Day was the first printer to issue a book in Saxon characters—Ælfric's Saxon homily, edited by the Archbishop himself under the title "A Testimonie of Antiquitie" in 1567; and five years later, at the Archbishop's private press at Lambeth, he printed Parker's own work "De Antiquitate Ecclesiæ Britannicæ," which not only appeared in a new italic letter, but is believed to have been the first privately printed book ever issued in this country. At this time, and for long afterwards, English books were almost entirely printed in the type now known as black-letter, Roman type being but sparingly used, and that only for quotations and the like, while the new italic letter, for which the Archbishop had a strong partiality, was rarer still—as may be seen in the following extract from a letter which he addressed to Lord Burghley in 1572. The letter relates to the work which he had arranged to be written by Dr. Clarke in reply to the great book of the Catholic controversialist Nicholas Sandars, entitled "De Visibili Monarchia Ecclesiæ," which had appeared in the year previously, and incidentally tells of Day's troubles with rival booksellers, who were evidently envious of his success :

. . . As for some particular matters which be not known to me I trust to have your counsell furthermore to the better accomplishment of this work, and others that shall follow. I have spoken to Day the printer, to cast a new Italian letter, which he is doing, and it will coste him forty marks, and loathe he and other printers be to printe any Latin booke, because they will not

## JOHN DAY AND HIS RIVALS

here be uttered, and for that bookes printed in England be in suspicion abroad. Now, sir, Day hath complained to me that, dwelling in a corner, and his brotherne envying him, he cannot utter his bookes which lie in his hande, two or three thousand pounds' worthe. His friends have procured of Pawles a lease of a little shop to be sette up in the church-yarde, and it is confirmed. And what by the instant request of some envious booksellers, the Mayor and Aldermen will not suffer him to sett it up in the church-yarde, wherein they have nothing to do but by power. This shop is but little and lowe, and leaded flatt, and is made at his great cost to the sum of forty or fifty pounds, and is made like the terrace, fair railed and posted, fitt for men to stand uppon in any triumph or show, and can in no wise either hurte or deface the same. And for that you of the Councell have written to me and others of the Commission to help Day, etc., I praeise your lordship to move the Queen's Majestie to subscribe her hand to these or such letters, that all this entendment may the better go forward, wherein your Lordship shall deserve well both of Christ's Church and of the prince and state.\*

With such powerful patrons to help him, Day eventually succeeded in getting the little shop which had been the cause of so much agitation and pother. He used it like most other stationers in the Churchyard, merely for the purpose of selling his books, his printing still being carried on at his dwelling over Alders Gate. In addition to his Saxon and Italian types, Day is said to have vastly improved the Greek. "Day seems, indeed," according to Dibdin, "to have been (if we except Grafton) the Plantin of old English typographers; while his character and reputation scarcely suffer diminution from a comparison with those of the illustrious contemporary just mentioned." To which it may be added that he was one of the earliest music-printers in this country. He was also the publisher, among other notable books, of the first authorised editions of "Gorboduc" and Ascham's "Scholemaster." In 1573 both Day and his wife had a narrow escape from an apprentice named Asplyn, who, actuated, apparently, by a species of religious mania, threatened to kill them both. "The spirit moved me,"

\* Wright's "Elizabeth and her Times," vol. i., 1838.



## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

he explained, when asked what he had to say in his defence; and as he had also been concerned in printing prohibited books he was sent to prison. Day himself lived until the summer of 1584—four years after attaining to the highest office of his craft, that of master of the Stationers' Company—and was buried at Little Bradley, in Suffolk. His epitaph sums up his public and domestic record with a quaintness which is almost flippant :

Here lies the Day that darkness could not blynde ;  
When Popish foggs had overcast the sunne  
This Day the cruel night did leave behynd.  
To view and shew what bloodi Actes were donne  
He set a Fox to wright how Martyrs runne  
By death to lyfe. Fox ventured paynes and health  
To give them light ; Day spent in print his wealth.  
But God with gayne returned his wealth agayne  
And gave to him as he gave to the poore.  
Two wyves he had partakers of his payne,  
Each wyfe twelve babes and each of them one more.  
Als [Alice] was the last increaser of his stoore,  
Who mourning long for being left alone,  
Set up this toombe, herself turned to a Stone.

The meaning of the last line, it is scarcely necessary to add, lies in the fact that the widow of John Day sought consolation in a second marriage. Day left the book trade at a time when it was full of troubles both from within and without. It had long been a grievance among the unprivileged men that all the plums of the trade had been picked by such monopolists as Day and Richard Tottel, the last of whom was also among the best known of the sixteenth-century publishers. He issued from the Hand and Star in Fleet Street not only law books, which he had the sole right to print, but the collection of poetry known as Tottel's Miscellany, as well as Lydgate's "Fall of Princes" (1554), the Earl of Surrey's "Æneid" (1557), and various editions of Grafton's "Chronicles," Tottel having married a sister of that worthy chronicler and printer. Monopolies similar to those just mentioned—





JOHN DAY

THE EARLIEST AUTHENTIC PORTRAIT OF ANY OF  
THE FATHERS OF THE ENGLISH BOOK TRADE



## EVILS OF MONOPOLIES

and there were many others of the kind—pressed heavily and unfairly on the smaller and unprivileged men. They led to murmurings and a growing discontent which extended over many years of Queen Elizabeth's reign. In a document which Prof. Arber dates "about August 1577," containing "The Griefes of the Printers, glass sellers and Cutlers sustained by reason of privileges granted to private persons," the victims of these monopolies—printers and stationers to the number of 175, together with such others "as do lyve by bookselling," who, though not members of the Stationers' Company itself, were free of other civic guilds, and thus qualified to practise any other trade—complained that the privileges lately granted by her Majesty "hath and will be" their overthrow: "Besides their wyves, children, apprentizes and families, and thereby the excessive prices of bookes, prejudiciall to the state of the whole Realme, besides the false printinge of the same."

Among their grievances was that "John Jugge, besides being her Majestie's printer, hath gotten the privilege for the printing of Bibles and Testaments, the which was common to all ye printers; Richard Tothill the printing of all kinds of lawe books, which was common to all Printers, who selleth the same at excessive prices, to the hindrance of a greate number of pore students; John Daye the printinge of A.B.C. : and Catechisms, with the sole selling of them by the collour of a Commission. There bookes were the onelie releif of the most porest of ye printers."\* It is curious to find among the signatories to the petition the name of Christopher Barker, who, in this very same year of 1577, on the death of John Jugge, bought his patent for the printing of the Old and New Testament in English, succeeded him as her Majesty's printer, and became as stout a defender of privileges as any of the monopolists against whom he had just been pleading. It was one of the evils of this system of patents that they were generally granted for life, with the right of reversion

\* Arber's "Transcript of the Stationers' Registers," vol. i.

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

to the owner's successor, so that as the popular books were seized upon one by one in this way it became more and more difficult for the poorer stationers honestly to secure even a hazardous living.

Small wonder that the more ardent spirits among the unprivileged members of the craft rebelled when they found that their petition led to no redress. Since the authorities made it impossible for them to compete on fair terms, they declared war, and adopted methods which warfare alone could attempt to justify. They began by surreptitiously pirating their licensed rivals' copyrights, printing whole editions of their smaller and more popular properties under forged imprints, and selling them mainly in the provincial towns and among the country fairs, where there was less risk of detection. Two years before his death John Day took action against Roger Ward for printing and William Holmes for selling great numbers of the "A.B.C." with his forged imprint, this leading to a memorable Star Chamber case extending from February to July 1582. Holmes pleaded ignorance, "beinge a yonge man lately come owt of his yeares and but lately set upp for hym selfe"; but Ward, who was one of the most determined opponents of the monopolists, confessed to the printing of no fewer than 10,000 copies of the "A.B.C.," prevaricated as to his responsibility, and pleaded in his defence that "a verye small number in respecte of the rest of the Companye of Stacioners Prynters, have gotten all the best bookes and coppyes [copyrights] to be printed by themselves by Privyledge, whereby they make bookes more dearer than otherwise they wolde be, and have lefte verye littell or nothings at all for the resydue of the Company of Printers to lyve upon unles they sholde worke under them for suche small wages as they of them selves please to geve them, whiche is not sufficiente to fynde suche workemen and their famylies to lyve upon, whereby they through their Priviledges inritche themselves greatly and become (some of them) greate purchasers of Landes and owners

## AN ELIZABETHAN BOOK WAR

of large possessyons. And the owners of the reste of the sayd Prynters beinge manye in number and moste of them howshoulders so extremely poore, that by reason of pretended Priviledges and restrayntes that happenethe thereby can scarce earne breade and Drinke by their trade towards their lyvinge. . . .” \*

Roger Ward seems to have suffered several terms of imprisonment for thus defying the authorities, but he stood to his guns; and not only Ward himself, but his stalwart wife, who on one occasion later in the same year held the “fort”—in his feigned absence, so it was said—against the officials of the Stationers’ Company, who had been sent to search his house, but had perforce to retire discomfited. It was but a few months later (December 1582) that Christopher Barker drew up his report on the printing patents granted since the queen’s accession. Here he complains, among other things, that the Psalms in metre, which had been granted to Day by the Earl of Leicester, as well as the Small Catechism which Day printed with his “A.B.C.,” now properly belonged to him. These books, “being occupied of all sorts of men, women and children, and requiring no great stock for the furnyshing thereof,” were profitable “copies.” This was not his only grievance, for William Seres, he writes, also “encrocheth farther” upon his preserves with the privilege for the printing of psalters, primers, and prayer-books, which rightly belonged to Barker. Yet Master Barker really had small cause for complaint, and he frankly admitted that “as it is I have the printing of the Olde and Newe Testament, the statutes of the Realme, Proclamations, and the Book of Common Prayer by name, and, in general works, all matters for the Church,” which, shorn though these patents were of much of their profit, were nevertheless substantial things to be thankful for.

From the same report of 1582 we can detect the gradual but continuous parting of the ways between the

\* Arber’s “Transcript of the Stationers’ Registers,” vol. ii.



## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

printer and the bookseller. We have already quoted the reference to this cleavage as noticed by Barker in dealing with the condition of the trade in the days of Edward VI., when the provision of letters (type) and other material for the press was so costly a matter that most of the printers were driven through necessity to compound beforehand with the booksellers at costs which were so low that the printers themselves "were most tymes small gayners and often losers." And in coming down to the days of "our soveraigne Lady the Queen's Majesty that nowe is," he shows how the booksellers had pursued their advantage, and incidentally how necessary it was for some few printers at least to be protected by the Crown :

The booksellers [he explains] being growen the greater and wealthier number have nowe many of the best Copies and keepe no printing howse, neither beare any charge of letter, or other furniture but onlie paye for the workmanship, and have the benefit, both of the imprinting, and the sale of all "Commentaries of the Scriptures," and (till of late yeres of all Schoole bookes, Dictionaries, Cronicles Histories) bookes of Phisick, and infinite others ; most whereof are free to all : so that the artificer printer, growing every daye more and more unable to provide letter and other furniture, requisite for any good worke ; or to gyve mayntenance to any such learned Correctours as are behovefull, will in time be an occasion of great discredit to the professours of the arte, and in myne opinion prejudiciall to the common wealth. . . . I speake not this (though it be very true) as wishing any restraynt to Bookesellers, or Bookebinders, but that they may print, and have printed for them such good bookes as they can orderly procure : for even some of them, though their skill be little or nothing in the execution of the art, have more judgement to governe, and order matters of printing, than some Printers themselves : But unless some few printers be well mayntayned it will bring both the one and the other to confusion and extreme povertye.\*

Let us give Master Barker his due for writing thus honestly and manfully ; for, when all is said and done, he cannot be blamed for looking after his own interests, and his treatment of the pirates, as he now regarded his old

\* Arber's "Transcript of the Stationers' Registers," vol. i.

## A CHAMPION OF FREE TRADE

associates, is not ungenerous. A whole volume could be filled with the tangled story of this Elizabethan book war, but we are compelled merely to glance at it in passing. The prime mover in the revolt was John Wolfe, a printer from the Fishmongers' Company, who openly defied the authorities, and twice went to prison for his pains. He still declared that he could and would print any lawful book, in spite of any commandment of the queen to the contrary. "‘Tush,’ said he," to quote from the reports of the Stationers' Company on the subject,\* "‘Luther was but one man, and reformed all the world for religion, and I am that one man, yet must and will reform the government in this trade.’" Wolfe, it is also stated, "hath oftentimes delivered most disloyal and unreverent speeches of her majesty's government, not once giving her highness any honourable name or title, as ‘She is deceived,’ ‘she shall know she is deceived,’ also ‘she is blindly led, she is deceived.’" The end of it all was a special commission and a compromise in which the monopolists, at the beginning of 1584, yielded a number of their copyrights for the benefit of their poorer brethren—John Day, most liberal of them all, surrendering as many as thirty-six, including Ascham's "Scholemaster"—and John Wolfe, having "acknowledged his error, was relieved with work."† But this was not quite the end, for while the printers and booksellers were thus quarrelling among themselves the Crown seized the opportunity still further to tighten its hold on the trade.

Two days after the monopolists made their concession to the insurgents the authorities, as if to illustrate their

\* Arber's "Transcript of the Stationers' Registers," vol. ii.

† Prosperity, as in so many cases of the kind, seems to have altered the point of view of this once doughty champion of liberty, for John Wolfe, who had already been admitted to the Stationers' Company, was afterwards as zealous as any one in protecting the privileges which now came his way, as well as in routing out secret presses as an official of the company at the time of the Mar-prelate troubles. He lived to become printer to the City of London, and, after publishing works by Gabriel Harvey, Robert Greene, Thomas Churchyard, and others, died a pattern of respectability.

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

proclamations against prohibited books with an object-lesson which would not be forgotten, condemned the Catholic printer William Carter for treason, and on the following day had him hanged, disembowelled, and quartered at Tyburn. This was the time, it must be remembered, when Mary Stuart's supporters were plotting against Elizabeth with desperate ingenuity, and the authorities had reason to be on their guard against such men as Carter, who had already been in prison "for printinge of lewde pamphlets," and only three years previously had been traced by Bishop Aylmer as the publisher, "amongst other nawghtye papystycall books," of one written in French on "The Innocency of the Scottish Queen, who was then a prisoner for laying claim to the crown of England and endeavouring to raise a rebellion"—"a very dangerous book," adds Aylmer, in his letter to Burghley on the subject. Carter for some reason was not prosecuted on that occasion, which perhaps explains his rashness in issuing the book which cost him his life—Gregory Martin's "Treatise of Schism," alleged to contain a veiled incitement to Catholic gentlemen at Elizabeth's Court to assassinate the queen. Carter denied that the offending passage had any such meaning, but his denial proved of no avail.

Earlier in Elizabeth's reign, as may be seen in Prof. Arber's monumental "Transcript," the queen had occasion to issue numerous proclamations against seditious books other than those to which we have referred. All serve to prove that the authorities found it increasingly difficult to prevent the determined activity of the Romanist press, especially at the time of the rebellion in the North and the other ill-starred endeavours on behalf of Mary Stuart. Later there is similar evidence of trouble with the Puritans, for proclamations were printed showing the stern attempts that were being made to repress certain of their printed books, as well as "the insolent and inordinate contemptes of such as refuse to come to common prayer and divine service, according to

## ELIZABETH'S VENGEANCE

the order established by Parliament." The most vindictive instance of the queen's vengeance in this connection occurred in 1581, in the case of the hot-headed Puritan John Stubbs, bencher of Lincoln's Inn, and William Page, his bookseller, the one for having written and the other for having published the book entitled "The Discovery of a Gapyng Gulf, whereunto England is like to be swallowed by another French marriage, if the Lord forbid not the banes by letting her Majestie see the sin and punishment thereof." Hugh Singleton, the printer of the book, was pardoned. Among other indiscretions, the hapless Stubbs had protested against this "imp of the crown of France" venturing to pay Elizabeth a personal visit incognito—which he stoutly denounced as "An unmanlike, unprince-like, French kind of wooing." The punishments threatened under her own proclamations were not sufficient to appease Elizabeth's wrath in this case, so she fell back on one of the more violent acts of Philip and Mary, and both author and publisher were condemned to suffer the loss of their right hands, which were accordingly chopped off with a butcher's knife and mallet in the market-place at Westminster. Stubbs redeemed this brutal business by a remarkable display of fortitude and loyalty. "I remember," says Camden, "standing by Stubbs, who, as soon as his right hand was off, took off his hat with his left, and cried aloud, 'God save the Queen!'" The next moment he fainted. Yet even this display of dauntless courage and devotion did not save him from the additional miseries of a long and rigorous imprisonment in the Tower.

Five years later—in June 1586—the Star Chamber strengthened its control of the press by a decree which consolidated and extended its powers defined in the earlier proclamations, and remained in force until the Star Chamber of Charles I. superseded it in 1637 by an injunction which, while it lasted, was even more peremptory and strict. The order of 1586, which Prof. Arber



## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

prints in full in the second volume of his "Transcript"—together with many other illustrative documents of the period—explained with much circumlocution that since the ordinances heretofore made and published had not had the desired effect of repressing the abuses and enormities of "dyvers contentyous and disorderlye persons professinge the arte or mysterye of pryntinge or sellinge of books . . . but doe rather daylye more and more encrease," her Majesty of her most godly and gracious disposition was determined that all printers and booksellers should henceforth be ruled and directed "by some certayne and knowen rules and ordynaunces whiche should be invyolabie kepte and observed." The first of these rules was to the effect that every press already set up, or thereafter erected, was to be notified exactly to the master and wardens of the Stationers' Company. The second prohibited all printing save in London and the two universities, each university being allowed one press each, "and noe moe." The third rule was drawn up in order "to diminish the excessive number of prynters," it being enacted that no one should start printing till the "excessive multytude" be abated and diminished by death or otherwise to so small a number as the Archbishop of Canterbury and Bishop of London for the time being should consider requisite and convenient for the good service of the realm; and after this happy minimum had been reached the Stationers' Company, as further vacancies occurred, was empowered to nominate successors to be approved and licensed by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. The remaining rules are mainly in the nature of a formidable list of penalties and punishments for disobeying these injunctions, limiting the number of apprentices, and threatening binders, as well as booksellers, with three months' imprisonment for dealing in any books printed contrary to the decree.

For all their threatening enactments the authorities found it as impossible as ever to stop the flow of prohibited books, their chief trouble now being the growth



## THE MARTIN MAR-PRELATE CONTROVERSY

of the Puritan movement against Elizabeth's official episcopacy. Whitgift's high-handed policy was not calculated to extinguish the smouldering fire of dissent. Persecution has ever been but the means of adding fuel to the flames of religious controversy in this country. One result of Whitgift's hard, uncompromising rule was the fierce war of words known as the Martin Mar-prelate controversy, which raged at its hottest about 1589. Unable openly to publish their opinions, the Elizabethan Puritans had recourse to the customary means of secret presses and the mysterious machinery which always seemed ready at hand to scatter forbidden literature all over the land, no matter to which side it belonged, the Church of Rome, the Church of England, or the Church of Nonconformity. It is no part of our purpose to relate in detail how these Puritan zealots, led by the young Cambridge graduate John Penry (afterwards hanged), spread broadcast the violently worded and often scurrilous pamphlets which appeared under the one pseudonym of "Martin Mar-prelate." We need only refer to the controversy as showing the difficulty experienced by Elizabeth's Government in repressing the illegitimate publishing which went on throughout her reign. Whitgift, who was attacked with a fury of invective which exceeded the bounds even of Tudor decency in matters of this kind, did his best to stop the slanders, personally organising the search for the hidden presses which were distributed over various parts of the country, but without meeting with much success. There were always sympathisers ready to cover up the tracks of the offenders. The "Anti-Martinists," as they were called, who included among their champions John Lyly and Thomas Nash, were more successful in carrying the campaign into the enemy's camp by means of counter-attacks. It was only when both sides were worn out with their exertions that the end came in sight—to quote the wise words of Bacon in his "Advertisement touching the controversies of the Church of England" (1590)—"of this

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

immodest and deformed manner of writing lately entertained, whereby matters of religion are handled in the manner of the stage."

It is a relief to turn from all this turmoil of religion to the birth of the Golden Age of English literature—to watch it from the open bookshops, as it were, of the publishers who were destined to play the midwife's part in ushering it into the world. The good they did, it is true, was unpremeditated. Much of their work was done surreptitiously, or by means which for the first time dragged authorship through the mire. But this was not altogether the booksellers' fault, as we hope presently to show; and some of the men who mounted to fame on the shoulders of the great Elizabethans were honourable enough according to their lights. The fine record of William Ponsonby is a case in point. Ponsonby, who was admitted to the Stationers' Company in 1571, started in business for himself in St. Paul's Churchyard, at the sign of the Bishop's Head—close by the shop of Gabriel Cawood (son and successor of John Cawood, the royal printer), who there published, in 1578, the first English novel of contemporary life, Lyly's "Euphues." Perhaps Ponsonby had the success of "Euphues" in his mind when, eight years later, he sought permission from Sidney's old Oxford friend, Sir Fulke Greville, to publish Sir Philip's "Arcadia," already well known by its wide circulation in manuscript copies. "Euphues," with its marked originality of style and purpose, had received an enthusiastic welcome from the cultured classes of England, each part running into four or five editions in the first three years, and maintaining a steady sale for many years afterwards. "Sir," wrote Fulke Greville to Sidney's father-in-law, Sir Francis Walsingham, in a letter endorsed November 1586—only a month after Sir Philip's death at Zutphen—"This day one Ponsonby, bookebynder in pole's churchyard came to me and told me that there was one in hand to print Sir Philip Sidney's old Arcadia, asking me if it were done with your honor's consent, or

## SIR PHILIP SIDNEY'S BOOKS

any other of his frendes. I told him, to my knowledge, no ; then he advysed me to give warninge of it, either to the Archbishope or Doctor Cosen, who have, as he says, a copy to peruse to that end."\* The letter proceeds to suggest that "some deliberation" would be advisable before publishing Sidney's book, but adds: "Gayn ther wilbe, no doubt, to be disposed by you: let it be to the poorest of his servants: I desyre only care to be had of his honor, who, I fear, hath carried the honor of these latter ages with him."

Sidney's relatives appear to have shown some reluctance in thus giving the "Arcadia" to the world, but Ponsonby eventually received their permission, and entered the work in the Stationers' Register on August 23, 1588, his "copy" being "authorised under the Archbishop of Canterbury's hand." The first edition did not appear until 1590, and was not even then an accurate text. In 1593 another edition appeared, "augmented and ended," and five years later, by arrangement with the same publisher, the whole was revised by Sidney's sister, the Countess of Pembroke, who also added Sir Philip's "Apologie for Poetrie," the Sonnets, and "Astrophel and Stella." The "Apologie for Poetrie" had been first issued in 1595 by Henry Olney, "at his shop in Paule's Churchyard, at the signe of the George, neere to Cheapgate," though Ponsonby disputed his claim to the copyright. "Astrophel and Stella" was first printed for Thomas Newman earlier than this (in 1591), but without permission, efforts being made by Sidney's friends, through Lord Burghley, to bring about its suppression. This was the edition edited by Thomas Nash, who, fresh from his labours as a professional controversialist in the war against the "Martinists," was employed by the publisher in this more peaceful pursuit. The edition was withdrawn, but later in the same year Newman—possibly because another surreptitious edition had meantime

\* Printed by Dr. Grosart in the introductory essay to his edition of the poet's works, 1877.

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

appeared (published by Matthew Lownes)—was authorised to reissue the volume, but without Nash's contributions, and with numerous textual revisions.

William Ponsonby has a higher claim to fame as the publisher of "The Faerie Queene." Probably the close and tender friendship which had existed between Sidney and Spenser had something to do with this more illustrious connexion, but, however that may be, the greater poet published all his works, with the exception of "The Shepherd's Calendar," through the same bookseller. "The Shepherd's Calendar" had been issued years before (in 1579) by Hugh Singleton, "dwelling in Creede Lane, near unto Ludgate, at the signe of the Gylden Tunne," and after being assigned by him in the following year to John Harrison the younger, of Pater-noster Row, passed through five editions in the poet's lifetime. Ponsonby entered "The Faerie Queene" (Books I.-III.) in the Stationers' Register on December 1, 1589, Spenser having entrusted him with the manuscript on his arrival in London from Ireland in the previous month. Sidney's "Arcadia" was then passing through the press, and both works appeared in the following year. Spenser, disappointed in the hope of preferment which had brought him back to Court—though Elizabeth, to whom the work had been dedicated, loosened her purse-strings to the extent of a pension in his favour of £50 a year—returned reluctantly not long afterwards to his lonely home at Kilcolman Castle. The poet's reputation now encouraged his publisher to collect his minor verse, which he issued under the title of "Complaints containinge sundrie small poems of the world's vanity," prefaced with Ponsonby's own address to the reader, to the following effect; "Since my late setting foorth of the Faerie Queene, finding that it hath found a favourable passage amongst you; I have sithence endeavoured by all good means (for the better encrease and accomplishment of your delights) to get into my handes such small Poems of the same author's as I heard were disperst abroad



## SPENSER AND HIS PUBLISHER

in sundrie hands ; and not easie to bee come by, by himselfe, some of them havinge bene diverslie imbeziled, and purloyned from him, since his departure over sea." The publisher proceeds to hold out a promise of a further collection of lost or scattered pieces, "when I can either by himselfe or otherwise attaine to . . . in the meane time praying you gentlie to accept of these, and graciouslie to entertaine the *new Poet*." \* The pieces mentioned in this letter, however, were never recovered ; but in 1594 Spenser sent Ponsonby for publication his sonnets " ' Amoretti ' and ' Epithalamion, ' " which Ponsonby entered in the Stationers' Register on November 19 that year, and issued in 1595 with a dedication to Sir Robert Needham. "To gratulate," to quote the publishers' words, "your safe return from Ireland I had nothing so ready, nor thought anything so meet, as these sweete and conceited sonnets, the deede of that wel-deserving gentleman, maister Edmonde Spenser ; whose name sufficiently warranting the worthinesse of the work, I do more confidently presume to publish in his absence." Spenser's later works were all issued by the same publisher, who also had the distinction of bringing into the world, among other notable books, Greene's "Mamillia," and Bedingfield's translation of Machiavelli's "Florentine History." Ponsonby was warden of his company in 1597-98. He figures for the last time in the Stationers' Register on July 5, 1604, as one of the joint publishers of a new edition of North's famous translation of Plutarch's "Lives"—the chief source of Shakespeare's classical learning, which was first published in 1579 by Thomas Vautrouiller and John Wight, and was one of the best read books of the age.

Several of the privileged men were enterprising and public-spirited enough not only to invest some of their profits in learned and costly works which must have involved no inconsiderable risk, but to suggest books

\* The name which had been applied to Spenser on the publication of "The Shepherd's Calendar."



## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

themselves and engage authors to write them. "It was at the expense of Christopher Barker," writes Mr. H. G. Aldis in the "Cambridge Modern History,"\* "that George Turberville undertook the compilation of 'The Noble Arte of Venerie or Hunting' (1575), the publisher himself seeking out and procuring works of foreign writers for the use of the compiler. When William Fulke was at work upon his 'Confutation of the Rhenish Testament,' he and two of his men, with their horses, were maintained in London for three-quarters of a year by the publisher of the book, George Bishop, who also supplied Fulke with such books as he required, and at the finish paid him forty pounds for his work."

Fulke was luckier than most writers of his day. For the booksellers, having now got the upper hand of the printers, gradually drew the professional authors into their power. The day was rapidly passing when authors wrote only for the love of the thing, or because they could not help it—when they could say with Alvan, of "The Tragic Comedians," "My pen is my fountain—the key of me; and I give myself, I do not sell; I write when I have matter in me and in the direction it presses for, otherwise, not one word!" Men of letters, who were also men of fashion, long continued to hold themselves aloof from any commercial dealings with mere booksellers, but writing was gradually becoming a none too creditable trade. Men could now be lured for a miserable pittance to turn out anything, from one of those noble translations which formed such a feature of the Elizabethan book trade, to controversial pamphlets, or street ballads, the last of which came from the press in quantities so vast that one publisher who specialised in these sheets—Richard Jones by name—entered in the Stationers' Register in 1586 no fewer than 123 at one time. John Stow, the most accurate historian of his age, told Manningham the diarist that he "made no gains by

\* Vol. iv., Mr. Aldis's chapter on "The Book Trade, 1557-1625," an illuminating account of a very obscure period.

## JOHN STOW'S REWARD

his travails." It is true that he received £3 and 40 copies for his great "Survey of London," published by John Wolfe in 1598, and that "for his pains in the 'Brief Chronicle,'" he was paid 20 shillings and 50 copies, but these were humiliating returns for labours in which he had spent not only the best part of his life, but all his little fortune.\* Let us not forget, however, that James I. rewarded him in 1604 with a beggar's license—in other words, with royal letters patent authorising him to appeal for "kind gratuities." He seems to have set up basins for alms in the streets, but, fortunately, did not long survive his Majesty's magnanimity.

\* Stow's "Annals" first appeared in 1588, "published by R. Newberie at the assignment of H. Bynneman"—men who were both well known in the Elizabethan book world. Ralph Newberie, or Newbery, as it is generally spelt, issued many important works between 1560 and his retirement in 1605, including Barnabe Googe's "Eclogues" and Hakluyt's "Voyages." Henry Bynneman printed mainly for other stationers, and his name is frequently met with in the considerable undertakings of his day, sometimes in association with other printers.



THE DEVICE OF JOHN WIGHT

## CHAPTER FIVE : SHAKESPEARE'S PUBLISHERS

**M**EANTIME the first fruits were being gathered of the Golden Age of our dramatic literature, mainly by men who, according to modern ideas, had little right to the harvest. The more respectable, privileged booksellers, if not content merely with fat monopolies, were too busy with weightier undertakings to bother their heads about the chance plays of contemporary dramatists. It was left to their less fortunate brethren to search the byways as well as the highways for new manuscripts that seemed likely to make "vendible copies," and thus bring a little grist to their mill. So that these served their purpose it mattered little to the printer or bookseller how the "copies" found their way into his hands. If he thought of author's rights at all it was but to remember that the author himself was only too well aware of their non-existence—indeed, the very idea of author's copyright was regarded in some high quarters as prejudicial to the public interest—and with a shrug of the shoulders he could well afford to dismiss such a trivial matter from his mind. A pirate, if you like, but it was an age of buccaneering; and let us, in denouncing him as a mere unprincipled money-seeking bookseller, remember not only that he was so hedged about with monopolies and privileges that it was extremely difficult for him to make a living in a more legitimate way, but also that, for the very same reason, he all unwittingly performed services to literature the value of which it is now impossible to over-estimate. For it is to the unprivileged and often piratical bookseller that we owe the preservation in print of the greater part of the dramatic work of the reigns of Elizabeth and James I., and much of the poetical and popular literature as well.

It was a pirate who, in 1594, first paid Shakespeare the doubtful compliment of producing one of his plays in print. The pirate was John Danter, the play "Titus

## “DANTER THE PRINTER”

Andronicus”—much of which is attributed to Kyd as well as to Shakespeare—and it was published jointly by Edward White and Thomas Millington. Three years later Danter followed this up with his surreptitious first edition of “Romeo and Juliet,” printed in quarto from an imperfect copy, and published anonymously. A more unworthy beginning to a series destined to immortality could scarcely be imagined. “Danter the Printer” was notorious as a dealer in disreputable literature, being introduced as such in the satirical play “The Return from Parnassus,” publicly acted about 1601 at St. John’s, Cambridge—“that most famous and fortunate Nurse of all learning,” as Nash wrote of it in 1589. Danter was thus probably the first printer or bookseller to be impersonated under his own name in English drama, though Ben Jonson has a reference to “Master John Trundle,” the publisher of ballads, in his “Every Man in his Humour,” which was first produced, with Shakespeare among the players, in 1598. It was this same Trundle who, in 1603, published, with Nicholas Ling, the first quarto of “Hamlet” (*see* p. 113). In “The Return from Parnassus” Danter appears in St. Paul’s Churchyard in the company of Ingenioso, who offers him a book which our library censors of to-day would hesitate to touch even with the tips of their fingers. Ingenioso calls it “A Catalogue of Cambridge Cuckolds.” The scene is so short, and so little known in this connexion, that practically the whole of it may not be out of place here, as printed in W. Carew Hazlitt’s edition of Dodsley’s “Old English Plays” (1874):

INGENIOSO : Danter, thou art deceived : wit is dearer than thou takest it to be : I tell thee, this libel of Cambridge has much fat and pepper in the nose ; it will sell sheerly [quickly] underhand, when all these books of exhortations and catechisms lie moulding on thy shopboard.

DANTER : It’s true : but, good faith, Master Ingenioso, I lost by your last book ; and, you know, there is many a one that pays me largely for the printing of their inventions : but, for all this, you shall have forty shillings and an old bottle of wine.

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

INGENIOSO : Forty shillings ! a fit reward for one of your rheumatic poets, that beslaunders all the paper he comes by, and furnishes all the chandlers with waste-papers to wrap candles in ; but as for me, I'll be paid dear even for the dregs of my wit : little knows the world what belongs to the keeping of a good wit in waters, diets, drinks, tobacco, etc. It is a dainty and a costly creature ; and therefore I must be paid sweetly. Furnish me with money, that I may put myself in a new suit of clothes, and I'll suit thy shop with a new suit of terms. It's the gallantest child my invention was ever delivered of : the title is, "A Chronicle of Cambridge Cuckolds." . . . Speak quickly : else I am gone.

DANTER : O, this will sell gallantly ; I'll have it, whatsoever it cost : will you walk on, Master Ingenioso ? We'll sit over a cup of wine, and agree on it.

INGENIOSO : A cup of wine is as good a constable as can be to take up the quarrel between us. [*Exeunt.*]

Danter was also the publisher of Nash's attacks on Gabriel Harvey, the most scurrilous of whose tracts, "Have with you to Saffron Walden,"\* appeared in the year before his surreptitious editions of "Romeo and Juliet." Hence Harvey's contemptuous reference to Nash as "Danter's man." It was in "Have with you to Saffron Walden" that Nash himself admitted, in defence of some of his more shameless productions, that he had been forced by poverty and "in hope of gain" to write "Amorous Villanellos and Quipassas" for "new-fangled Galiardos and senior Fantasticos."

To the reading public Shakespeare was known as a poet before his plays began to issue from the press, though he made his name first of all in his double rôle of actor-dramatist. He was more fortunate in the printer of his two narrative poems, "Venus and Adonis" and "Lucrece," the first of which appeared in 1593 and the second in 1594. This printer was his fellow townsman—and, it is assumed, his personal friend—Richard Field,†

\* Where Gabriel Harvey was then living.

† "Venus and Adonis" was entered by Field in the Stationers' Register on April 18, 1593, as follows : "Entred for his copie under th[e h]andes of



## SHAKESPEARE'S FIRST PRINTER

who left Stratford in 1579 and served his apprenticeship in London with Thomas Vautrollier,\* in due course marrying his master's widow and succeeding to the business in 1590. Blades once suggested that when Shakespeare drifted to London in 1586 Field found temporary work for him in Vautrollier's office, but this theory is discredited. Shakespeare's poems attracted far greater attention than his plays. "Venus and Adonis," which appears, from its unusual accuracy, to have been printed from the author's own manuscript—if not actually seen through the press by him—ran into seven editions in the first eight years, while "Lucrece" reached a fourth edition in the poet's lifetime. A fifth edition of "Lucrece" was published in 1616—the year of Shakespeare's death—by Roger Jackson, who issued it, with the poet's name, as "newly revised." This, however, was only one of the tricks of the trade, the text being inferior to the earlier editions.

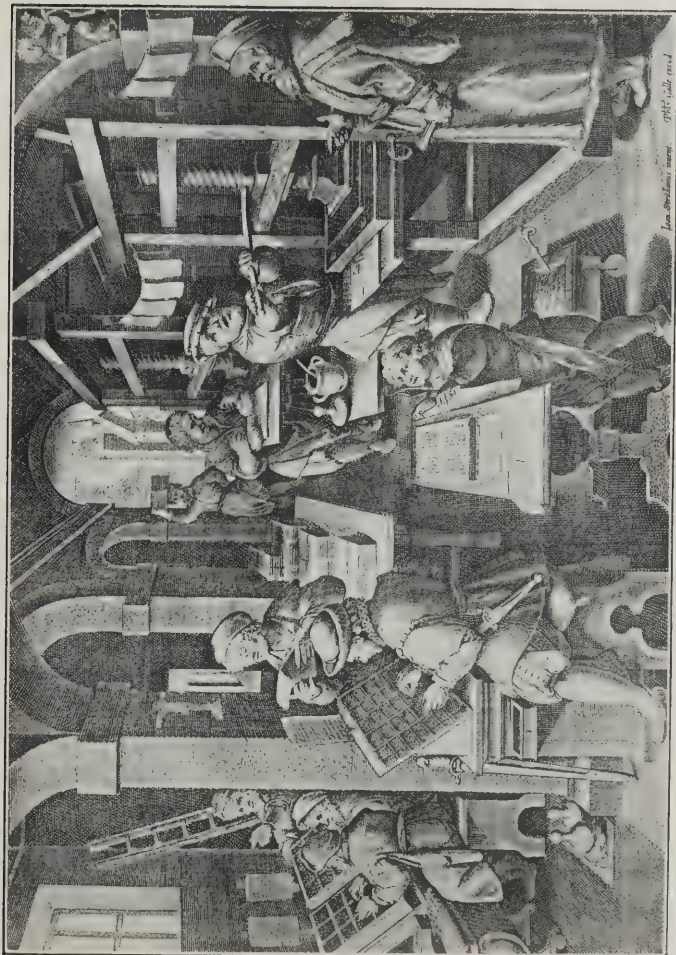
It was not long after the first appearance of "Venus and Adonis"—the Christmas of 1594, to be exact—that Shakespeare received his summons to act at Court with other leading players—Elizabeth, like James I., becoming

the Archbishop of Canterbury and master Warden Stirrop, a book intituled 'Venus and Adonis.'" The registration fee was sixpence, which was about the average amount for entries in this Register. On June 25 of the following year there is another entry showing that "Venus and Adonis" was on that day assigned over to Master Harrison, senior, by whom, two years later, it was transferred to William Leeke. The second narrative poem, though printed by Field, was not, as in the case of "Venus and Adonis," originally published by him. It is entered in the Register on May 9, 1594, by John Harrison, senior—not much more than six weeks before taking over "Venus and Adonis"—the entry running: "Entred for his copie under th[e h]and of master Cawood, Warden, a booke intituled 'The Ravysheiment of Lucrece.'" Both books therefore were sold in 1594 by the elder John Harrison, at his shop at the sign of the White Greyhound, in St. Paul's Churchyard.

\* Thomas Vautrollier was a Huguenot refugee and an excellent printer. He made two attempts to establish a bookselling business in Edinburgh, but does not seem to have met with much success. He finally returned in 1586 with John Knox's "History of the Reformation" in manuscript, but his impression of that work was suppressed.

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

an open admirer of his genius. Despite the absence of any copyright law, Shakespeare's friendly relations with Field, according to Mr. Sidney Lee, doubtless secured him some part of the profits in the large sale of the poems. If that were so, it is strange that Shakespeare should apparently have been content with the literary earnings which he received from these narrative poems alone. Is it possible that he came to regard all such dealings with booksellers as beneath his dignity? It is worth remembering that it was just after his first return to Stratford-on-Avon in 1597—to raise the prestige of his family and to buy New Place, the largest house thereabouts—that his father, it is presumed at the poet's instigation, made his original application for a coat of arms, and that henceforth William Shakespeare was always formally described as “of Stratford-on-Avon, gentleman.” Now Shakespeare knew well enough that no one in those days could hope to take rank as a man of fashion if he condescended to strike a bargain with any publisher or bookseller—even if he consented to have his works printed at all. The only gentlemanly course was to permit his books to circulate in manuscript among his friends. Sir Philip Sidney would not allow any of his books to be printed during his lifetime; and, as Mr. Pollard remarks in his bibliographical study of the “Shakespeare Folios and Quartos,” to have offered Sidney money for his “Defence of Poetrie” or his “Astrophel and Stella” “would have been to run a serious risk of being thrown downstairs.” Our theory is only tenable on the assumption that Shakespeare was something of a snob, or rather, a natural aristocrat, with—as we can see from his plays—a great contempt for the proletariat. In any case it is a remarkable fact that not only were all his plays published without the slightest sign of interest on his part, but his “Sonnets” as well, which had been circulated in manuscript for at least eleven years before their unauthorised publication in 1609. The plays might be accounted for by the fact that it was then



A PRINTING OFFICE OF ABOUT THE YEAR  
SIXTEEN HUNDRED

*After the contemporary drawing by Johannes Stradanus*



## SHAKESPEARE'S INDIFFERENCE

customary for dramatists to sell their works outright to one or other company of players, and to realise that they had no further right in them; but this does not hold good in the case of the "Sonnets." Nor is there any record of a single word of protest when the worst freebooters of the press went so far as to publish seven worthless dramas with Shakespeare's name or initials fraudulently attached as author. Obviously he had now become a valuable asset in any of these sixpenny ventures—for that was the usual price at which a new quarto of this character was published: a price equal to something like four or five shillings at the present time. Yet, apart from the possible exceptions of "Venus and Adonis" and "Lucrece," both of which appeared before he set up to be "of Stratford-on-Avon, gentleman"—and one protest to which reference will presently be made—he seems to have treated everything respecting the publication of his works with an indifference which almost amounted to contempt. Some of the quartos were shamefully produced, not only in their general make-up, but in the all-important matter of textual accuracy. It seems incredible that Shakespeare did not see the printed editions of his sixteen plays published during his lifetime, or that, having seen them, he did not take some steps to ensure that they were at least accurately printed. He was fond of litigation, and even in the absence of any legal right as author of the plays, it would not have been impossible, with the powerful influence which he could bring to bear upon the Stationers' Company, to call the pirate publishers to book. Was not the patron of his company the Lord Chamberlain himself? It might have been a troublesome business, but, as Mr. Pollard points out, injured authors were not without means of obtaining redress in the shape of a fine or imprisonment through the Stationers' Company. And that the company itself was not always ready to license a play merely on the production of the sixpenny fee is clearly shown by such entries as those in which



## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

James Roberts, for example, in 1598, was credited with the "copy" of "The Merchant of Venice" only on condition that the book was not to be printed by the said "James Roberts, or anye other whatsoever, without lycence first obtained from the Right Honorable the Lord Chamberlain"; and again in 1603, when he received permission to print "Troilus and Cressida" only "when he hath gotten sufficient authoritye for yt" (*see* p. 114).

The out-and-out pirates rarely ran this risk of refusal, preferring to take their chance of a fine or imprisonment to seeking any one's authority. This was not invariably the rule, however, in Shakespeare's case; but that the pirates regarded him as fair game, and unlikely to retaliate, is suggested by the cool manner in which Thomas Thorpe, the publisher of the "Sonnets," both in the Stationers' Register and on the title-page of the book itself, brusquely designated the work "Shakespeare's Sonnets," instead of following, as Mr. Lee observes, "the more urbane collocation of words invariably adopted by living authors, viz., 'Sonnets of William Shakespeare.'" The one protest of which we have any record survives in Thomas Heywood's "Apology for Actors"—issued in 1612—wherein he tells us that Shakespeare resented the unwarranted use of his name by William Jaggard in 1599, when that worthy issued, under the title of "The Passionate Pilgrim, by W. Shakespeare," an unauthorised collection of scattered verse, the bulk of which was not by Shakespeare at all. Among the contents, however, were two of the Sonnets which subsequently appeared in the complete, but still surreptitious, edition of the poems. Heywood was treated in similar fashion by the same publisher in a later edition of "The Passionate Pilgrim," and airs his grievance in his dedicatory epistle. He knew, he added, in referring to Shakespeare, that he was "much offended with Mr. Jaggard that (altogether unknown to him) presumed to make so bold with his name." It was perhaps as a result of this objection that

## THE LEGALITY OF THE QUARTOS

Shakespeare's name was removed from the title-page of some of the copies.

Mr. Lee, according to Mr. Pollard, "has pirates on the brain," regarding practically all the printers and publishers of Shakespeare's day as tarred with the same brush and equally dishonest. Mr. Pollard is so eager to whitewash their characters that he goes to the other extreme, holding that the amount of wrong done to professional authors was much less than might have been expected, and that piracy was quite the exception to the rule—a plea which would probably have surprised no one more than the unprivileged stationers themselves. Nevertheless Mr. Pollard makes out a strong case for the legality of most of the Shakespearean quartos, his evidence seeming to prove that "good" copies are found in the plays duly entered in the Stationers' Register, and that these were obtained by the publishers from their lawful owners, the playhouse authorities to whom the manuscripts had been sold by Shakespeare himself. The pirated editions—those not entered in the Register—he writes, "were few and clearly distinguishable from the honest ones, and they have left no trace whatever on our present texts." \* The whole question is of great importance in any critical consideration of Shakespeare's plays, but is too controversial and involved to be discussed at length in the space at our disposal. It is undisputed, however, that Shakespeare suffered severely at the hands of the pirates in a certain number of the plays published during his lifetime, to say nothing of his treatment in the matter of the "Sonnets."

Thomas Thorpe, who first issued the complete collection

\* "Shakespeare Folios and Quartos," 1909. Mr. Pollard surmounts the awkward fact that one of the "good" quartos is "Love's Labour's Lost," which was printed for Cuthbert Burby in 1598 by "W. W."—the initials of William White—without any previous entry in the Stationers' Register, by the theory that this was not what it professes to be, the *editio princeps*, "but an authorised edition superseding a pirated one now lost, and thus precisely on all fours with the (as I believe) authorised "Romeo and Juliet" of 1599, which superseded Danter's edition of 1597."

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

of the "Sonnets" in 1609, belonged to a bookselling class plentifully represented among Shakespeare's publishers—a class which picked up its living largely by the procuring of manuscripts for the press. Its members were not over-scrupulous as to the means employed to achieve their purpose. If the playhouse managers objected to the publishing of their plays, or demanded too high a fee, needy actors could be bribed to lend or sell their written copies; or, failing that, shorthand writers could be sent to take the piece down as well as they could. That "Romeo and Juliet" was first printed from a copy obtained, wholly or in part, by this last-named means can hardly be doubted, according to Mr. Pollard, who also ascribes to a similar origin the first and imperfect editions of "The Merry Wives of Windsor" (published in 1602 by Arthur Johnson at the sign of the Fleur de Luce in St. Paul's Churchyard) and "Pericles" (published by Henry Gosson "at the sign of the Sunne in Pater-noster Row" in 1609). Heywood complains in the prologue to his play of "Queen Elizabeth," which had been published surreptitiously for the first time in 1605 :

That some by stenography drew

The plot : put it in print : (scarce one word trew :)

and so compelled him to prepare a corrected text for the revival of 1637. Heywood is also our authority for knowing that some dramatists at least sold their plays to publishers as well as to the playhouse managers, though the practice was evidently regarded as double-dealing of a somewhat shady character. The reference is in the preface to Heywood's "Rape of Lucrece" (published by Nathaniel Butter in 1630), when he speaks of playwrights who incur great "suspition of honestie" by arranging "a double sale of their labours, first to the stage and after to the Presse"—a thing which he prides himself on never having done. Some of his plays, unknown to him, had found their way into the printer's hands,

## PIRATES AND THEIR WAYS

and were so corrupt and mangled that he had been "as unable to know them as ashamed to chalenge them." In the case of "The Rape of Lucrece," therefore, he had obtained the consent of the stage authorities to furnish it out in its native habit, "because the rest have been so wronged in being publisht in such savadge and rugged ornaments." Plays, as we have shown, were by no means the only works popular among the pirates of the day, and many ways and means of obtaining surreptitious manuscripts of other books were open to the professional procurer. One likely source would be the scriveners, or their assistants, who were still employed to copy works which were being circulated only in the fashionable form of manuscript, and who were doubtless not above striking a bargain on their own account with one or other of the agents in question, when any book that was being talked about came into their hands.

Thorpe was probably not worse than many others of his kind. He was less fortunate than most, for whereas the majority of these men only employed such means as stepping-stones to more dignified positions in the trade, Thorpe alone, apparently, began and ended his career as a sort of homeless publisher, though for one brief period, in 1608, he blossomed forth with a shop of his own, at the sign of the Tiger's Head, in St. Paul's Churchyard. Apart from the three books which he is known to have issued from this address—one of them being George Chapman's "Conspiracie and Tragedie of Charles Duke of Byron" and another Ben Jonson's "Masques of Blackness and Beauty" \*—the whole of the books with which he was associated were printed and sold for him by other stationers. His first literary prize was Marlowe's "Lucan," a manuscript copy of which fell into his predatory hands in 1600, and he dedicated the first edition to his friend Edward Blount, who, two years previously, had himself come into possession of Marlowe's "Hero and

\* Thorpe succeeded in publishing four of Ben Jonson's works altogether and three of Chapman's.



## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

Leander," and, being but a stationer's assistant at the time, had issued it through other members of the trade. Blount, whose later career is dealt with on pp. 115-117, declared in his preface to "Hero and Leander" that he published it out of respect for Marlowe, whose intimate friendship he claimed, and whose memory he defended against the attacks of his detractors.

When Thorpe published the first edition of Shakespeare's "Sonnets," he had given up his shop at the sign of the Tiger's Head, and, after getting the printing done by George Eld, arranged for the sale of the copies with two other stationers—William Aspley and John Wright. Having entered the copy in the Stationers' Register, and thus proclaimed himself proprietor of the work, he asserted his right by inditing the dedication which has led to so many misunderstandings :

To the onlie begetter of these insuing sonnets, Mr. W. H., all happnesse and that eternitie promised by our ever living poet, wisheth the well-wishing adventurer in setting forth. T. T.

Mr. Lee settles this perplexing phrase almost conclusively in his life of Shakespeare. The mysterious "Mr. W. H." did not, as so many students had previously assumed, indicate the initials of the sonnets' youthful hero, but were merely those of Thorpe's partner in the speculation. "He is best identified," says Mr. Lee, "with a stationer's assistant, William Hall, who was professionally engaged, like Thorpe, in procuring 'copy.' In 1606 'W. H.' won a conspicuous success in that direction, and conducted his operations under cover of the now familiar initials. In that year 'W. H.' announced that he had procured a neglected manuscript poem—'A Foure-fould Meditation'—by the Jesuit Robert Southwell, who had been executed in 1595, and he published it with a dedication (signed 'W. H.') vaunting his good fortune in meeting with such treasure-trove. When Thorpe dubbed 'Mr. W. H.' with characteristic magniloquence, 'the onlie begetter [*i.e.*, obtainer or procurer]



## DEBATABLE MATTERS

of these ensuing sonnets,' he merely indicated that that personage was the first of the pirate-publisher fraternity to procure a manuscript of Shakespeare's sonnets and recommend its surreptitious use." Thorpe's venture was the only edition of the "Sonnets" published in the poet's lifetime. We have already seen that his two narrative poems had been frequently reissued during the same period; and most of his published plays were reprinted before his death, six of them running into three and four editions, and two of them ("Richard III." and the first part of "Henry IV.") into as many as five editions.

The circumstances surrounding the origin of each of these quartos are of the deepest interest and value, but any serious attempt to discuss them here would not only carry us outside the scope of our inquiry, but bring us at once to debatable matters upon which such distinguished critics as Mr. Lee and Mr. Pollard agree most emphatically to differ. We have already mentioned the publisher of the earliest plays to appear in print—"Titus Andronicus" and "Romeo and Juliet." Thomas Millington, who had a share in the publication of "Titus Andronicus," issued three other early Shakespearean quartos—the first drafts of the second and third parts of "Henry VI.," and "Henry V.," the last of which he issued jointly with John Busby, of St. Paul's Churchyard. The free and easy manner in which some of these men made use of Shakespeare's name and dramatic works furnishes a striking illustration of the negligible part played by authors in the fate of their offspring. Busby, who, as we have just seen, was Millington's partner in "Henry V.," secured a license for the "Merry Wives of Windsor" at the beginning of 1602, but parted with it to Arthur Johnson. "In like fashion," says Mr. Lee, "Busby and Millington made over their interest in 'Henry V.' before August 14, 1600, to Thomas Pavier of Cornhill, a reckless pirate, who was responsible for the disreputable reissues of 1602 and 1608 (Arber, iii. 169). It was Pavier who published the plays of 'Sir John Oldcastle' (1600) and the 'York-

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

shire Tragedy' (1608) under the fraudulent pretence that Shakespeare was the author." Many other pseudo-Shakespearean plays and poems were unblushingly foisted on the public now that the poet's reputation was firmly established. Thomas Creed was one of the worst offenders among the pirates of the spurious plays, but he was a better craftsman than most of his competitors in this Shakespearean group, having served his time with the distinguished printer-publisher, William Ponsonby. He printed a considerable number of the early quartos, some with texts which were obviously pirated, others with good texts which may or may not have been authorised by the players. He printed the quartos of "Richard III." (1602 and 1605), "Romeo and Juliet" (1599), "Henry V." (1600 and 1602), and "The Merry Wives of Windsor" (1602).

We have it on Mr. Lee's authority that the first publisher to issue any of Shakespeare's wholly authentic plays was Andrew Wise, a stationer in a small way of business at the sign of the Angel, in St. Paul's Churchyard, who published the quartos of "Richard II." and "Richard III." in 1597, and had the satisfaction of bringing both out in new editions in the following year. In February 1598 Wise obtained a license for the first part of "Henry IV.," but transferred his interest in all three quartos in 1603 to Matthew Lawe, of St. Paul's Churchyard. Wise evidently had special facilities for obtaining copies of Shakespeare's plays, for, three years before he made over the quartos first mentioned, he secured, in association with William Aspley another bookseller of St. Paul's Churchyard, the license to publish both "Much Ado about Nothing" and the second part of "Henry IV." The entry of the last quarto in the Register of the Stationers' Company is of special interest, because it is the first occasion on which Shakespeare's name appears in that record, all the previous entries having been anonymous.

One of the more substantial of Shakespeare's early booksellers was James Roberts, who, unlike most of the

## ROBERTS AND SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS

play publishers, was something of a monopolist, holding the patent with R. Watkins to print almanacks and prognostications,\* which, in the complaint of the unprivileged, "weare the onelie relief of the most porest of ye printers," besides taking over in 1594 a number of theological and other copyrights which had belonged to John Charlewood, whose widow he seems to have married not long afterwards. For nearly twenty years Roberts also held the privilege of printing and publishing the "players' bills," or programmes, and in this way must have enjoyed exceptional opportunities of picking up manuscript copies of Shakespeare's plays from the managers and actors. In 1600—if we are to believe the title-pages—he printed the quarto editions of "The Merchant of Venice" and "Midsummer Night's Dream," as well as the second edition of "Titus Andronicus," and, four years later, the complete quarto of "Hamlet." At one time he was held responsible for the printing of the mutilated first quarto of "Hamlet," but later researches have led to its being assigned to the press of Valentine Simmes, who also printed the first quartos of "Richard II.," "Richard III.," "Much Ado about Nothing," and the second part of "Henry IV." Only the publishers' names—Nicholas Ling and John Trundle—appear on the title-page of the first edition of "Hamlet." Roberts figures as publisher, as well as printer, of the first edition of "The Merchant of Venice," but in the other quartos with which he is associated he appears for the most part as printer only. We have said, "if we are to believe the title-pages" advisedly, for Mr. Pollard, with the help of Mr. Walter W. Greg, has elaborated an ingenious theory to the effect that two of the Roberts quartos of 1600, together with seven other early quartos with fictitious dates—including the first edition of "King Lear,"

\* The patent lasted until the end of Elizabeth's reign, James I. handing over the privilege to the Stationers' Company and the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. After lasting for nearly two centuries the monopoly was broken down by Thomas Carnan, a London bookseller (*see* p. 261).

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

ostensibly published in 1608 by Nathaniel Butter, "at the sign of the Pide Bull, neere St. Austin's Gate"—were really printed in 1619 by William Jaggard in a collected edition of Shakespeare's plays which forestalled the famous First Folio by four years.\* Mr. Pollard arrives at his conclusions not only by inference, but by a knowledge of sixteenth-century technique which is perhaps unequalled, but the whole question remains so arguable that, like many of the problems which beset the keen Shakespearean student, it will probably never be settled to everybody's satisfaction.

Meantime it is safer to turn to the undisputed facts relating to James Roberts's career. He was associated with other notable works besides Shakespearean quartos, including Marston's "Metamorphosis of Pigmalion's Image" (published by Edmund Matts in 1598) and "The Scourge of Villanie" by the same dramatist in the following year, Jervis Markham's "Tragedie of Sir Richard Grinville" (1595), Turberville's "Songs and Sonnets," and a new edition of "Euphues." In 1603 he nearly added "Troilus and Cressida" to his list, for the license, as stated on p. 106, was made out in his name in that year, but the players in this case seem to have exercised their right to intervene, for nothing came of it. It was not until the beginning of 1609 that "Troilus and Cressida" was again licensed to appear in print, and this time the privilege was granted to two other stationers—Richard Bonian and Henry Walley—for whom the work was printed by G. Eld. In or about 1608 Roberts's printing business was transferred to William Jaggard, who had a bookselling shop in the Churchyard of St. Dunstan's-in-the-West, where he now developed the other branch of his craft, and in 1611 became Printer to the City of London. Roberts's publishing stock, according to Mr. Pollard, was not taken over by him until 1615. The business included the right to print the players' bills—a privilege which Jaggard must have found of the

\* "Shakespeare Folios and Quartos," 1909.



## EDWARD BLOUNT

greatest value when the time came to collect the plays of Shakespeare for the famous folio of 1623.

Much of the credit for the First Folio belongs, however, to Edward Blount, who learnt his craft under William Ponsonby, helping him in the great days of his association with Spenser, Robert Greene, and Sidney's "Arcadia." Though admitted to the Stationers' Company in 1588—at the end of his ten years' apprenticeship—he did not start publishing on his own account until 1594; but, once established, he soon launched out in a series of enterprises which ensured him, quite apart from the First Folio, a distinguished place in the bookselling annals of his day. He not only published John Florio's Italian-English Dictionary (issued in 1598 under the title "A World of Words"), but commissioned him to undertake the English version of Montaigne's "Essays," which ranks among the noblest of Elizabethan translations. This was published by Blount in 1603, while still content with the modest shop—"little more than an open stall"—\*—which he had taken against the great north door of St. Paul's Cathedral in 1594.

With the development of his business Blount was compelled to move, in 1603, to a more substantial house at the sign of the Black Bear, in St. Paul's Churchyard. "The conditions of the trade," says Mr. Lee, "did not permit him to contribute substantially—if at all—to the support of authors. But in private life he was honestly interested in literature, and was ambitious of social intercourse with its creators." Blount published works for Ben Jonson and Daniel, and his connexion with Marlowe we have already touched upon in our references to Thomas Thorpe. His other great ventures before sharing in the production of the First Folio included Thomas Shelton's translation of "Don Quixote," the first part of which appeared about 1612—while the

\* Mr. Sidney Lee, in the excellent study of Edward Blount which he contributed, under the title "An Elizabethan Bookseller," to "Bibliographica," vol. i., 1905.



## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

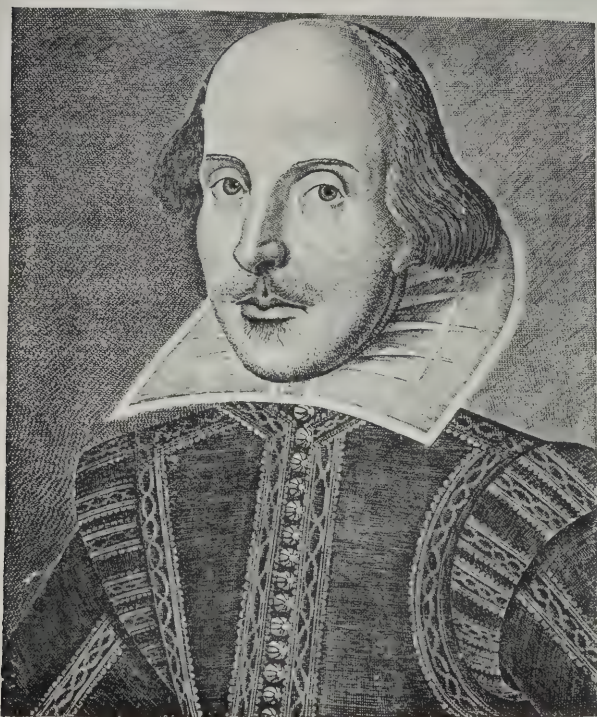
publisher was in temporary partnership with William Barret—and the second part in 1620. His association with Shakespeare's name began in 1601 with the curious collection of verse entitled "Love's Martyr ; or, Rosalin's Complaint," which included "A Poetical Essaie on the Turtle and Phoenix" signed with the poet's name in full, and since printed in all collected editions of Shakespeare's works. "Happily," as Mr. Lee remarks in his life of the poet, "Shakespeare wrote nothing else of like character."

The First Folio was beyond the individual resources of either Blount or Jaggard, so a little syndicate was formed such as became the custom of the trade in later years in most undertakings involving considerable expense. William Jaggard had just retired from active business, but he played a prominent if not the leading part in the preparation of the folio, his connexion with the playhouses doubtless helping tremendously. He is probably entitled to divide the chief honours of the enterprise with Blount, who not only took a considerable share in the financial risk, but is credited with a large part of the literary and editorial work involved in its production. The three other stationers concerned were Isaac Jaggard, William's son, who had just succeeded him in the printing business, John Smethwicke, and William Aspley, the last being one of the two booksellers entrusted by Thomas Thorpe with the sale of Shakespeare's "Sonnets," and, as already stated, joint publisher with Wise of the first quarto of "Much Ado about Nothing," and the second part of "Henry IV." Aspley had also been associated with Blount in several of his earlier undertakings. Smethwicke, who was a neighbour of the Jaggards in St. Dunstan's Churchyard, knew something of Shakespeare's value from two late editions which he had published of "Romeo and Juliet," as well as one edition of "Hamlet."

The First Folio came from the press of Isaac Jaggard, and included not only the plays published in Shakespeare's lifetime, as well as the posthumously printed "Othello" (1622), but seventeen other works which had

MR. WILLIAM  
**SHAKESPEARES**  
COMEDIES,  
HISTORIES, &  
TRAGEDIES.

Published according to the True Originall Copies.



L O N D O N  
Printed by Isaac Iaggard, and Ed. Blount. 1623.

TITLE-PAGE OF THE FIRST FOLIO  
SHAKESPEARE [1623]

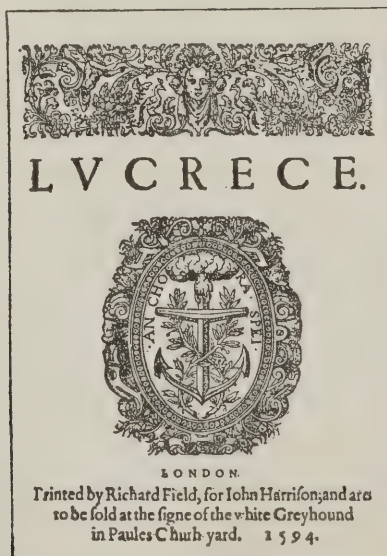


## THE FAMOUS FIRST FOLIO

never hitherto been printed—"The Tempest," "The Two Gentlemen of Verona," "Measure for Measure," "Comedy of Errors," "As You Like It," "All's Well," "The Taming of the Shrew," "Twelfth Night," "Winter's Tale," the third part of "Henry VI.," "Henry VIII.," "Coriolanus," "Timon of Athens," "Julius Cæsar," "Macbeth," "Antony and Cleopatra," and "Cymbeline." The names of Blount and Isaac Jaggard alone appear as publishers of the book, the colophon stating that it was printed at the expense of William Jaggard, Smethwicke, Aspley, and Blount. The publishers claim on the title-page that the whole thirty-six plays are printed "according to the true originall copies," and however that may be, there seems little doubt that the manuscript copies were all obtained for the purpose from the manager of the company of players to which Shakespeare belonged. Unimpeachable evidence of former piracy is given in the dedication addressed to the two Herberts—"the incomparable pair of brethren"—the Earls of Pembroke and Montgomery, the first of whom was Lord Chamberlain and patron of the playwright: "As where you were abus'd with diverse stolne and surreptitious copies, maimed and deformed by the frauds and stealthes of injurious imposters that expos'd them: even those are now offer'd to your view cur'd and perfect in their limbes, and all the rest absolute in their members as he conceived them." The dedication was written by the two editors, Shakespeare's old friends and brother-players, John Heming and Henry Condell, who probably protested with truth that they were actuated in their share of the work "without ambition either of selfe-profit or fame," and solely with a desire to "keepe the memory of so worthy a friend and fellow worker alive as was our Shakespeare." This First Folio, our supreme glory in literature, if not our proudest achievement in the matter of typography, has ensured for its promoters an enduring place in the annals of English publishing. Whatever were their faults as revisers of the

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

press, says Mr. Pollard, they preserved nearly twenty of Shakespeare's plays from total destruction, besides printing greatly improved texts of several others, "and for these inestimable benefits, had each of the venturers received the whole proceeds of the edition as his share of the profits, who shall say that they would have been overpaid?" Running into nearly 1,000 pages, the First Folio was sold for what was then the high price of twenty shillings—equal to eight or ten pounds of our own money. Mr. Lee has estimated from the number of copies that survive (now known to exceed 180) that the edition numbered 500. A perfect copy to-day is worth anything up to £3,600—the record price paid at Sotheby's on March 23, 1907, for the First Folio which had belonged to the late Frederick Locker-Lampson, of Rowfant.



REDUCED FROM THE TITLE-PAGE TO  
THE FIRST EDITION OF "LUCRECE."



## CHAPTER SIX : THROUGH THE REIGN OF JAMES I.

THE seventeenth century brings us to a new phase in the history of bookselling. In 1601 Queen Elizabeth, realising that the system of monopolies, which formed so large a part of her whole fiscal policy, was at length rousing her subjects to serious discontent, issued proclamations suspending all privileges of the kind until their legality had been examined and approved by the law officers of the Crown. But however much this may have benefited the book trade for the two remaining years of her life, it was soon nullified by the action of her successor, who expressly excluded books from the provisions of the famous statute by which monopolies were practically done away with. James not only confirmed individual privileges among the stationers, but permitted the Company itself, while still under strict State control, to become a sort of book trust for its own benefit. Mr. C. R. Rivington, Clerk of the Company, who throws some light on this development in his sketch of "The Records of the Worshipful Company of Stationers," says that there were originally five different trading stocks, called respectively the Ballad Stock, the Bible Stock, the Irish Stock, the Latin Stock, and the English Stock, the Company also holding for some years a patent for printing in Scotland, granted by the Scottish Parliament. On October 29, 1603, the partners in the English Stock secured the first of these grants from the new King, which secured to the Company the exclusive right of printing all primers and psalters (the King's printer excepted) as well as all almanacs and prognostications. Other valuable grants followed, and gradually a formidable trade monopoly was set up, the one good thing that could be said for it being that the poorer members of the Company, and the widows of earlier partners, participated in the profits. "The monopoly long claimed

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

by the Company under these charters," wrote Mr. Rivington in 1883, "has been swept away now nearly a century, but the English Stock still flourishes, and a considerable annual profit continues to accrue from the publication of almanacs and the '*Gradus ad Parnassum*,' the sole survivor of a long list of school-books which formerly issued from Stationers' Hall." The monopoly began by the founders of the English Stock buying out the stationers who had held their privileges in Elizabeth's time, "the which composition, together with a stocke raised by them, coste them great sommes of money." It then pleased his Majesty (to quote an extract from the State Papers printed by Prof. Arber in his introduction to the third volume of his "Transcript") "to grante the same unto them for the generale good of the whole Companie. . . . The petitioners have ever since the granting of the said Letters patents yearelie distributed, and by an Ordinance in that behalfe made, are to distribute £200 per Annum for ever, among the poore of the said grante." The profits from each Stock, apart from these charitable contributions, were divided among the partners according to their individual stake in the concern. This development led to long and bitter murmuring among the "poor Free-men and journeymen printers," who, in a petition to the Lords (printed by Prof. Arber), complained that the benefits of the charter, intended for the general good of the whole Company, had, under colour of relieving the poor, been converted to the monopolists in particular, "and the petitioners utterly ruined thereby." They prayed that the charter of privilege might be dissolved; but nothing, apparently, came of it.

The partners in the Bible Stock, however, who divided the right of issuing the Scriptures with the King's Printer, played a creditable part in the so-called "Authorised Version" of the Bible (1611), which originated out of the Hampton Court Conference of 1604. This familiar edition was printed at the expense of Robert Barker, son and successor to Christopher Barker as

## THE AUTHORISED VERSION

King's Printer, whose privileges included the right to print not only Bibles and New Testaments, but all Statute Books, as well as Acts of Parliament and proclamations. The King himself, to whom the translators dedicated the work as its "principal mover and author," paid nothing towards its expenses, the sole remuneration received by the learned divines, apart, of course, from its honour and glory, being 30s. weekly, which each of the seven revisers received from the partners of the Bible Stock in the Stationers' Company during the last nine months of their labours. The Company also provided them with a room at Stationers' Hall, where this final work was completed. The owners of the Bible Stock could afford to be generous, for Mr. Rivington tells us that no fewer than eight auditors were at one time required to examine the accounts, and that the profits were sufficient to enable the partners to lend money to the Company at six per cent. To-day the copyright of the Authorised Version, as well as the Book of Common Prayer, is vested in the Crown, the right to print them being granted by charter to Oxford and Cambridge Universities, and by license to the King's Printer. The Revised Version is the joint property of the two Universities, which paid £20,000 towards the expenses of publication.

Returning to the early years of the seventeenth century, we are still sadly lacking in information concerning the actual profits and losses of individual members of the trade, though the printer continued to complain that the bookseller—or publisher as we should call him—had matters too much his own way, and secured too many of the prizes. It was certainly easier and less expensive to start simply as a bookseller or publisher, without waiting for permission to set up a printing establishment. The young stationer could begin with a bookstall; and he had only to pick up a manuscript—it did not much matter how—have it entered as his "copy" in the Stationers' Register, get some one to print it for him

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

if he had no press of his own, and start publishing at once. A half-forgotten book that seemed worth re-printing, or even a ballad, would answer the purpose. The system of interchange which became a recognised practice at once provided him with an opportunity of stocking his booth or shop with other books at comparatively little expense. That was how John Dunton started his business later in the century, when, as he explains in his "Life and Errors," by exchanging through the whole trade the first book which he issued, "it furnished my shop with all sorts of books saleable at that time." There are references in the Stationers' Registers to show that this was quite an early custom. Many an apprentice who started in this humble way knew nothing of the printer's craft, having served his time with a bookseller or bookbinder; and having completed his apprenticeship, he was made free of the Stationers' Company whether he could print or not. Books in those early days were usually sold unbound, so that no great outlay was involved on that account, the binding being carried on, for the most part, as a distinct branch of the stationer's craft. As the young bookseller prospered so he could extend his business, stocking bound as well as unbound copies, and presently adding to his staff as many hack writers as he condescended to patronise.

With the printers it was different. In the early seventeenth century, and onwards to the time of the Long Parliament, when for a time there was greater freedom, they were handicapped by the Star Chamber Decree of 1586, which limited the number of master printers to twenty-five. That was a liberal allowance in the eyes of the ecclesiastical authorities, fearful as ever of the growing power of the press. Had not Christopher Barker, the Queen's Printer, in his official report of 1582, declared that eight or ten presses at the most "would suffice for all England, yea, and Scotland too"? Even the twenty-five printing houses, with their fifty odd presses which they boasted between them, were

## THE HEART OF THE TRADE

hopelessly insufficient to find promotion or even work for all the increasing number of journeymen and apprentices. Vacancies occurred among the master printers only at rare intervals—to be filled up in each case with the sanction of the Archbishop. Steps were taken to relieve the distress which inevitably ensued by restricting the number of apprentices, and limiting the number of copies of any one edition—except in special cases—to 1,250 or 1,500 copies, the whole work having to be reset in the event of a reprint being called for. There was one way, however, as Prof. Arber points out, in which the would-be master printer could come to a printing business of his own, independently of the court of assistants and the Archbishop, and that was to marry a master printer's widow. The good apprentice of tradition was wont to marry his master's daughter. In point of fact, in the stationer's case at all events, it was more often his master's widow. "It must have been a lively time among eligible young printers," remarks Prof. Arber, in the introduction to the fifth volume of his "Transcript," "when it was known that a master printer was dying." We meet with more than one widow, in the course of this "Transcript," who married three printers in succession, carrying her business with her in each case.

The trade still had its headquarters in St. Paul's Churchyard. Paternoster Row did not take its leading place until the days of Queen Anne, after Little Britain had had its reign and, in its turn, been superseded. Meantime the "Row" was more noted for its mercers, lace-men, haberdashers, and sempstresses than for its publishers, though it began modestly to put in its claim towards the end of the sixteenth century, when we find one or two noted stationers located there. The westward movement started in the reign of James I., when booksellers' shops sprang up here and there along Holborn, and down the Strand towards Charing Cross. Little Britain came to the front towards the middle of the seventeenth century, when London Bridge also had its spell of



## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

bookselling popularity, though one stationer, William Pickering, chiefly remembered as a ballad-monger, had a shop there as early as 1557. "In the next year," writes Mr. Aldis, in his chapter on "The Book Trade, 1557-1625," in the fourth volume of "The Cambridge History of English Literature," "he was 'dwellyng at Saynt Magnus Corner,' which, if not actually on the bridge, was at least hard by, and at this address the business continued for upwards of a century. As might be expected from its situation at the port of London, many nautical books were published here, and the seaman making his preparations for a voyage would step into the well-known shop and purchase 'The Art of Navigation,' or perhaps, if he were thither bound, a 'Card or rutter of the sea lyenge betwene Holland and Ffryseland,' and, were he so minded, he might fortify himself with 'The Seamans sacred Safetie or a praier booke for seamen.'" From the same authority we learn that the Frankfort fair still held so important a place in the English trade that John Bill, one of the leading London stationers, who was patronised by King James, Sir Thomas Bodley, and other distinguished men, thought it worth while in 1617 to begin the issue of a London edition of the half-yearly Frankfort "Mess-Katalog." This he continued for about eleven years, adding, from 1622 to 1626, a supplement of "Books printed in English." This supplement, as Mr. Aldis points out, was not the first attempt at a catalogue of English books. "The credit for that enterprise is due to Andrew Maunsell, who, induced, one may believe, by a love of books, deserted the calling of a draper to become a bookseller and the earliest English bibliographer." Maunsell's "First Part of the Catalogue of English printed Bookes" had been issued from his shop in Lothbury in 1595, and was devoted to works of divinity. The second part, which he published in the same year, "concerneth the science Mathematicall, as Arithmetick, Geometrie, Astronomie, Astrologie, Musick,

## UNDER JAMES I.

the Arts of Warre and Navigation ; and also of Physicks and Surgery," and was to have been followed by a third part dealing with rhetoric, history, poetry, and art, but this, unfortunately, never appeared. Maunsell printed but few books himself, but he was well known as a publisher.

The ordinary method of advertising and pushing new books we can but dimly discover by inference from such quotations as Ben Jonson's epigram to his bookseller (p. 130). "Occasionally," writes Mr. Aldis, "other works by the same author are mentioned in the preface of a book, but it is not till well into the seventeenth century that one now and again meets with a paragraph telling the 'courteous reader' to expect shortly from the press some new work by the same author ; and it was still nearer the end of the century before the publisher hit upon the expedient of impressing a spare leaf at the end of a book into the service of announcing other books issued by him."

Apart from the evil of monopolies, which remained a very real grievance among the unprivileged stationers, the trade enjoyed a period of comparative peace during the reign of James I. Whatever his faults and failings as a monarch, James was a genuine scholar, as well as something of an author, and could take a personal interest in the affairs of the Stationers' Company. His "*Basilicon Doron*" was written in 1599, but the first edition was not published until shortly before his accession to the English throne, when it was issued in Edinburgh by the King's Scottish printer, Richard Waldegrave. Copies evidently soon found their way to the English capital, for within a week of Elizabeth's death we find it entered in the Stationers' Register—"A booke called '*Basilicon*,' or his Majestie's instructions to his Dearest sonne Henrie the prince"—as the "copie" of six London stationers. The new King himself, it will be remembered, did not reach London until the following May. One of these enterprising booksellers was Master Simon Waterson, who published the last of Camden's great works, the

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

"Annals of the Reign of Elizabeth," which is entered in the Stationers' Register on March 21, 1615, as "'The History of England in Lattin from the yeare 1558 to the year 1588,' licensed to be printed by the Kinge's Maiesties Letter under the Signett directed to Sir Robert Cotton, knight, and Master William Cambden, Clarenceux." \* In November of the following year Waterson entered the "Annals" in an English translation, "to be printed when it is further authorised," but no English version appeared until 1627, several years after Camden's death. Waterson himself continued book-selling and publishing until 1635, among his chief works being many of the poems and plays of Samuel Daniel—including "Philotus," "The Queen's Arcadia," and his tragedy in the style of Seneca, entitled "Cleopatra"—as well as his "History of England" in prose. In the early days of his long career Waterson had been frequently fined for printing prohibited books, figuring in particular among the defendants in the Star Chamber case of 1585 for issuing large and surreptitious editions of the privileged books of the late John Day. In the first year of King James, on the death of William Ponsonby, he took over the most valuable copyrights of that celebrated publisher, including Sir Philip Sidney's "Arcadia" and Spenser's "Faerie Queene," all of which he assigned later in the same year to Matthew Lownes, retaining, however, a share in the "Arcadia."

Francis Bacon, who had just received his knighthood from James, published his "Advancement of Learning" in 1605 through Richard Ockhould, the first part being entered to him on August 19 of that year, and the second part exactly one month later. Ockhould published nothing else worth remembering in the course of his humble career, and even the "Advancement of Learning" he assigned to one William Washington on January 15, 1629, some two or three years after Bacon's

\* Camden's "Britannica" was published by Ralph Newbery in 1586, and ran through five editions before the end of the century.

## WHY BACON'S ESSAYS WERE PUBLISHED

pitiful death. There is more interest attaching to the first edition of the famous "Essays," which Bacon authorised Humphrey Cooper to publish in 1597. Only ten essays went to make up this slim octavo volume, and in his dedication "to Mr. Anthony Bacon, his deare brother," the author explains his reasons for thus issuing "these fragments of his conceites." He publishes them now, he says, "like some that have an Orcharde ill neighbored, that gather their fruit before it is ripe, to prevent stealing," meaning that he is doing so to forestall an unauthorised edition that he knows to be in preparation; "only I disliked now to put them out because they will bee like the late new halfe-pence, which though the silver were good, yet the peeces were small." Not to do so "had been to adventure the wrong they mought receive by untrue coppies, or by some garnishment."

Sure enough the essays were entered by one of the pirates, Richard Serger, on January 24, 1597, but against the entry is written in the margin of the Register—*cancellatur ista intratio per curiam tentam 7 februarij* (Arber). Twelve days later came the authorised entry in favour of Bacon's publisher, Humphrey Cooper—"A book intituled 'Essaies, Religious Meditations, Places of Perswasion and Disswation'"—and the volume itself appeared on February 7. The "Essays" were immediately successful, Cooper, whose shop was at the sign of the Black Bear, in Chancery Lane, issuing a new edition in 1598, and numerous other reprints, authorised and unauthorised, appeared during the author's lifetime. The ninth edition, which appeared in 1625—the year before Bacon's death—and contained fifty-eight Essays, was dedicated to the Duke of Buckingham. "I have enlarged them," writes Bacon, "so that they are indeed a New Worke." This edition, upon which all the modern reprints are based, bears the imprint: "Printed by John Haviland for Hanna Barret and Richard Whitaker, and are to be sold at the sign of the King's Head, in St. Paul's Churchyard."

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

Bacon, like Ben Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher, Thomas Heywood, and other dramatists who linked the great Elizabethan era with Jacobean days, had almost as many different publishers on his title-pages as Shakespeare himself. And, in the same way, many of the works of the playwrights have been preserved to us in print by wholly unauthorised means. Beaumont and Fletcher's "Knight of the Pestle," for example, was published anonymously in 1613 by Walter Burre, who writes in his dedicatory letter to Robert Keysar that he "had fostered it privately in his bosom these two years," adding incidentally that the play was a failure when first produced on the stage. It was a great success upon its revival in 1635. Walter Burre was the bookseller who, in 1614, published the first edition of Sir Walter Raleigh's unfinished "History of the World," written, as we all know, while the author was in the Tower. A good story, but, we are afraid, wholly apocryphal, of a dramatic interview four years later between Sir Walter Raleigh and his bookseller, is told by Winstanley in his "English Worthies" (1660) and repeated by Aubrey and other antiquarians. "Some few days before he suffered," so the story runs, "Sir Walter sent for Mr. Walter Burre, who formerly printed his first volume of the 'History of the World,' whom, taking by the hand, after some other discourse, he asked him how it had sold. Mr. Burre returned this answer: 'It sold slowly; it had undone him.' At which words of his, Sir Walter, stepping to his desk, reaches his other imprinted part of his history which he had brought down to the times he lived in, and, clapping his hand upon his breast, said with a sigh, 'Ah! my friend, hath my first part undone thee? The second part shall undo no more; this ungrateful country is unworthy of it': and immediately going to the fireside, threw it in, and set his foot on it until it was consumed. As great a loss to learning as Christendom could have sustained; the greater because it could be repaired by no other hand but his." The real fact was



## BEN JONSON'S FIRST FOLIO

that the volume published by Burre was a conspicuous success from the first, two editions being called for in the same year. It is true that James, who had expounded his views in his "Basilicon Doron" as to the divine right of kings, condemned the work—"for divers exceptions," says John Chamberlain, the letter-writer, "but specially for being too saucy in censuring princes"—but although the Archbishop of Canterbury, at his Majesty's command, ordered the Stationers' Company to suppress all the copies, the publisher appears to have surmounted the difficulty by cancelling the title-page, for the circulation of the book was allowed to continue. It reached another edition before Sir Walter's death, and remained one of the best selling books throughout the seventeenth century.

Two years before Raleigh died Bishop Montague published through the King's printers, Robert Barker and John Bill, the collected works of James himself, though his Majesty was no more popular as an author than as a king. This was in 1616, the year of Shakespeare's death, as well as the less-remembered death of Francis Beaumont. The band of immortals, associated with the old convivial gatherings at the "Mermaid," of which Beaumont wrote so feelingly to Ben Jonson, was fast breaking up. Raleigh, who followed Shakespeare and Beaumont two years later, had himself originated these "merry meetings" in the more heroic days of Elizabeth. Less than a fortnight after Beaumont's death—on March 19, to be exact—we find an entry in the Stationers' Register of one of the fifty odd plays that he wrote conjointly with John Fletcher. This was "The Scornful Lady," entered as the "copie" of Miles Patriche, by whom it was assigned in the following year to Thomas Jones. It was in 1616, also, that Ben Jonson collected his plays and verses in his First Folio, to which he ventured to give the title of his "Works," thus bringing down upon his head the scorn of contemporary wits for prostituting that term by such ephemeral things as

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

plays. The 1616 Folio was prepared for the press by Jonson himself, and issued by William Stansby, one of the most considerable stationers, and certainly one of the best printers, of his day. Stansby fell into serious trouble on one occasion for printing a seditious book, the Stationers' Company punishing him by nailing up his shop, though he was eventually allowed to resume his business. There was not the same demand for Ben Jonson as for Shakespeare, whose First Folio, published seven years later, went to its second edition in 1632,\* while Ben Jonson's Second Folio, sold in a succession of fragments by Robert Allot, Andrew Croke, Richard Meighen and H. Herringman, was not completed until 1641. Perhaps the advice which had been tendered by Jonson in his Epigram "To My Bookseller" (the "Epigrams," by the way, were licensed to John Stepneth in 1612) had been taken too much to heart :

Thou that mak'st gain thy end, and wisely well  
Call'st a book good or bad, as it doth sell,  
Use mine so too ; I give thee leave : but crave  
For the luck's sake, it thus much favour have,  
To lie upon thy stall till it be sought ;  
Nor offer'd as it made suit to be bought :  
Nor have my title-leaf on posts or walls,  
Or in cleft sticks, advanced to make calls  
For termers or some clerk-like serving man,  
Who scarce can spell th' hard names : whose knight  
less can.  
If, without these vile arts, it will not sell,  
Send it to Bucklesbury, there 'twill well.

To Ben Jonson, as to most professional authors of his day, the choice of a patron who would pay for the dedication of his book was even more important than

\* The Second Folio Shakespeare was printed by Thomas Cotes for John Smethwick, William Aspley, Richard Hawkins, Richard Meighen, and Robert Allot, each of whose names figures as publisher on different copies. To Allot, whose name is most often met with on the title-page, Blount had transferred on November 16, 1630, his rights in the sixteen plays which were first licensed for publication in 1623.—LEE.

## JONSON'S BEGGING LETTERS

that of a publisher. He was fortunate in securing the patronage first of James I., who conferred a pension of a hundred marks \* a year upon him, and subsequent but more uncertain bounties from Charles I. Jonson sent a characteristic petition to Charles begging that this pension of a hundred marks might be turned into pounds :

Please your majesty to make  
Of your grace, for goodness sake,  
Those your father's marks, your pounds.

The poet also drew a pension of a hundred nobles as the city of London's chronologer. William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, patron of so many needy writers, used to send Jonson a regular New Year gift of £20 wherewith to purchase books. Another of his most generous supporters was the Duke of Newcastle, to whom Jonson, in his letters, could humble himself in a manner which, though characteristic of the age, is nevertheless distressing to read. "Your lordship's timely gratuity," he tells the Duke on one occasion, "fell like the dew of heaven upon my necessities"; and some of his begging letters form pitiful commentaries on the state of authorship in those unprotected days.

But authors were already beginning to rebel against their inadequate rewards from the book trade itself. John Minsheu, the lexicographer, like John Ruskin and other ardent spirits in the nineteenth century, became his own publisher, printing his "Guide into Tongues" in 1617 at his own charge, and, since the booksellers refused to have anything to do with the work, sold it himself to the subscribers. This was the first book published by subscription in England, but apparently the venture was not very successful.

The case of George Wither, the poet and pamphleteer, is better known, and his "Schollers Purgatory" gives the most graphic, if somewhat prejudiced, portraits of

\* The mark was formerly a current coin in England and Scotland, and was equal to about thirteen shillings.

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

contemporary booksellers that we possess. Wither had obtained from James I. in 1623 letters patent granting him for a period of fifty-one years not only the monopoly or copyright of his own "Hymns and Songs of the Church," but an order for their compulsory insertion in every copy of the authorised "Psalm-book in meter," the privilege of issuing which had been granted to the Stationers' Company by the King at the beginning of his reign. The Stationers' Company at once came to loggerheads with him, and the bitter controversy ensued which the author perpetuated in his "Schollers Purgatory," published at the time of James's last Parliament. If the Star Chamber, as it did on occasion, chastised the stationers with whips, Wither chastised them with scorpions :

Neverthesse [he writes], conceive me not, I pray you, that I goe about to lay a general ymputation upon all Stationers. For, to disparage the whole profession, were an act neither becomming an honest man to doe, nor a prudent Auditory to suffer. Their mystery (as they not untruly tearme it) consists of divers Trades incorporated together : as Printers, Booke-binders, Clasp-makers, Bookesellers, &c. And of all these be some honest men, who to my knowledge are so greeved being over-born by the notorious oppressions and proceedings of the rest, that they have wished themselves of some other calling. The Printers mystery, is ingenious, paynefull, and profitable ; the Booke-binders necessary ; the Claspemakers useful. And indeed, the retailer of bookes, commonly called a Booke-seller, is a Trade, which being wel governed, and lymited within certaine bounds, might become somewhat serviceable to the rest. But as it is now (for the most part abused) the Bookeseller hath not onely made the Printer, the Binder, and the Claspemaker a slave to him : but hath brought Authors, yea the whole Commonwealth, and all the liberall Sciences into bondage. For he make all professors of Art, labour for his profit, at his owne price, and utters it to the Commonwealth in such fashion, and at those rates, which please himselfe.

Wither complains, among other things, of the excessive number of books. It is a complaint which we are familiar with in our own day ; and will be heard, probably, to the end of the chapter ; for it is the oldest cry in the



GEORGE WITHER  
 After the portrait by W. Holle





## WITHER AND THE BOOKSELLERS

history of bookselling. Does it not date back to the familiar words of Ecclesiastes, mentioned on p. 1? "Good God!" writes Wither in 1632, "how many dungboats full of fruitless works do they yearly foist on his Majesty's subjects; how many hundred reams of foolish, profane, and senseless ballads do they quarterly disperse abroad!" Yet the total number of entries in the Stationers' Register for 1632 does not amount to more than 109—an average of but two a week. This is not a strictly accurate list of the actual number of books published, for many works were issued without being entered, but it is sufficiently striking when we compare it with the total number of English publications given by the "Publishers' Circular" for the year 1909, amounting in all to no fewer than 10,725. The gems of the "Schollers Purgatory," however, are the two characters of the "Honest Stationer" and the dishonest, or "Mere Stationer," which, together with the foregoing extract, we are permitted to print from Prof. Arber's Introduction to the fourth volume of his "Transcript of the Stationers' Registers":

### AN HONEST STATIONER

An honest Stationer is he, that exercizeth his Mystery (whether it be in printing, bynding, or selling of Bookes) with more respect to the glory of God, and the publike advantage, then to his owne commodity: and is both an ornament, and a profitable member of a civill Commonwealth. He is the Caterer that gathers together provision to satisfy the curious appetite of the Soule, and is carefull to his powre that whatsoever he provides shalbe such as may not poyson or distemper the understanding. And, seeing the State intrusteth him with the disposing of those Bookes, which may both profit and hurt, as they are applyed, (like a discreet Apothecary in selling poysnous druggs) he observes by whom, and to what purpose, such bookes are likely to be bought up, before he will deliver them out of his hands. If he be a Printer he makes conscience to exemplefy his Coppie, i.e., to compose his book fayrely, and truly. If he be a Booke-bynder; he is carefull his worke may bee strong and serviceable. If he be a seller of Bookes, he is no meere Bookeseller (that is) one who

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

sellethe meere ynck and paper bundled up together for his owne advantage only ; but he is the Chapman of Arts, of wisdom, and of much experience for a little money. He would not publish a booke tending to schisme, or prophannesse, for the greatest gain ; and if you see in his shopp, any bookes vaine or impertinent it is not so much to be imputed his fault, as to the vanity of the Tymes : For when bookes come forth allowed by authority, he holds it his duty, rather to sell them, then to censure them : Yet, he meddles as little as he can, with such as he is truly perswaded are pernicious, or altogether unprofitable.

The reputation of Schollers, is as deare unto him as his owne : For, he acknowledgeth, that from them, his Mystery had both begining and means of continuance. He heartely loves and seekes the prosperity of his owne Corporation : Yet he would not iniure the Universities, to advantage it, nor be so sawcie as to make comparisons betweene them. He loves a good Author as his Brother, and wilbe ready to yeeld him the due portion of his labors, without wrangling. When he comes to be Maister or Warden of his Company, he labors truly to rectify what is amisse ; but fyndes so many perverseones, and so few of his good mind, that his yeare is out, before he cann bring any remedy to passe. He greeves for those Abuses which have been offered to me and other Authors ; but fynding that by speaking on our behalves he is likely to bring himselfe into an inconvenience without profit to us ; he prayes in silence for amendment, and that God would not lay to the charge of the whole Corporation, that which but some among them are guilty of. He feares none of those reprooves which are to be found in this booke : For, he knowes himselfe cleare, and is resolved to make sale of it so it come forth with allowance from Authority. In a word, he is such a man that the State ought to cherish him ; Schollers to love him ; good Customers to frequent his shopp ; and the whole Company of Stationers to pray for him ; For, it is for the sake of such as he, that they have subsisted, and prospered thus long. And thus, you have the true description of such a Stationer as I exempt from my reprofes : now followes the Character of him, at whose reformation I have aymed.

### A MERE STATIONER

A Meere Stationer is he that imagines he was borne altogether for himselfe, and exercizeth his Mystery without any respect to the glory of God, or the publike advantage. For which cause, he is one of the most pernicious superfluities in a Christian government, and may be well termed the Devills seed[s] man ; seeing

## “ A MERE STATIONER ”

he is the aptest Instrument to sowe schismes, heresies, scandalls, and seditions through the world. What booke soever he may have hope to gaine by, he will divulge; though it contayne matter against his Prince, against the State or blasphemy against God; And all his excuse will be, that he knew not it comprehended any such matter. For (give him his right) he scarcely reads over one page of a booke in seaven yeare, except it be some such history as the Wise men of Gotham; and that he doth to furnish himselfe with some foolish conceits to be thought facetious. He prayseth no booke, but what sells well, and that must be his owne Coppy too, or else he will have some flirt at it: No matter, though there be no cause; For, he knowes he shall not be questioned for what he sayes; or if he be, his impudence is enough to outface it. What he beleeves is prepared for him, in the next world, I know not, but, for his enriching in this life, he is of so large a faith, that he seems to beleeve, all Creatures and Actions of the world, were ordayned for no other purpose but to make bookes upon, to encrease his trade: And if another man, of his small understanding, should heare him plead his owne supposed right where none might contradict; He would halfe thinke, that all our Universityes, and Schooles of Learning, were erected to no other end, but to breed Schollers to study for the enriching of the Company of Stationers.

If an Author out of meere necessity, do but procure meanes to make sale of his owne booke, or to prevent the combinations of such as he, by some Royall or lawfull priviledge: He presently cryes it downe for a Monopoly; affyrming that men of his profession may go hang themselves, if that be suffred. Marry; Authors have a long tyme preserved a very thankfull generation of them from hanging, if they cannot afford them one booke of ten Millions to releve them withall in a case of need: and when that booke was the Authors owne alsoe, and no part of the Stationers former livelyhood. This is just as reasonable a complaint, as if a Company of Haglers should preferr a bill against the Cuntry Farmers, for bringing their owne Corne and other provisions to the next markett. He will fawne upon Authors at his first acquaintance, and ring them to his hive, by the promising sounds of some good entertainment; but assoone as they have prepared the hon[or]y to his hand, he drives the Bees to seek another Stall. . . .

If he be a seller of Bookes; he makes no conscience what trash he putts off; nor how much he takes for that which is worth nothing. He will not stick to belye his Author's intentions, or to publish secretly that there is somewhat in his new ymprinted

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

books, against the State, or some Honorable personages ; that so, they being questioned, his ware may have the quicker sale. He makes no scruple to put out the right Author's Name, and insert another in the second edition of a Booke ; And when the impression of some pamphlet lyes upon his hands, to imprint new Titles for yt, (and so take mens moneyes twice or thrice, for the same matter under diverse names) is no injury in his opinion. If he get any written Coppy into his powre, likely to be vendible, whether the Author be willing or no, he will publish it ; And it shallbe contrived and named alsoe, according to his owne pleasure : which is the reason so many good Bookes come forth imperfect, and with foolish titles. Nay, he oftentymes gives bookes such names as in his opinion will make them saleable, when there is little or nothing in the whole volume sutable to such a Tytle. . . .

He will take upon him to censure a booke as arrogantly as if he had read it ; or were a man of some understannding. He speakes of reverend Doectors, as disdaynfully as of schoole boyes ; And mentions the Universityes with no more respect, then if all their famous Colleges were but so many Almshouses maintained out of the Stationers Hall. . . . To conclude, he is a dangerous excrement, worthy to be cutt off by the State ; to be detested of all Schollers ; to be shun'd of all the people ; and deserves to be curst, and expeld out of the Company of Stationers. For, by the covetousnesse, cruelty, and unconscionablenesse of such as he ; a flourishing and well esteemed Corporation, is in danger to come to ruine, and disgrace.

Wither made good his claim to his monopoly for the time being, but ten years later the council disallowed the offending patent. The Stationers' Company clung to its privileges in no spirit of compromise, whether dealing with refractory authors or provincial printers. The long-standing rivalry between the Londoners and the University stationers, which began in Elizabeth's day, continued intermittently through the reign of James I. Its eventful record is referred to later in our history of the Cambridge University Press. Timperley quotes an anecdote about the learned Ussher which is said to mark the beginning of the contest between the Stationers' Company and Cambridge University about the right of printing Bibles. Ussher "one day hastening to preach at Paul's Cross, entered the shop of one of the stationers,



## THE "WICKED" BIBLE

and inquiring for a Bible of the London edition, when he came to look for his text, to his astonishment and his horror, he discovered that the verse was omitted! This gave the first occasion of complaint to the King of the insufferable negligence and incapacity of the London press." The best known of many corrupt editions of the Scriptures published in the seventeenth century was that which has so well earned the name of the "Wicked" Bible, making the seventh commandment read: "Thou shalt commit adultery." The omission of the one small but all-important word cost Robert Barker and Martin Lucas, the King's printers who issued this edition in 1631, a heavy fine, yielding a sum out of which a fount of Greek type and matrices was, at the suggestion of Charles I., bought by Archbishop Laud, and a press for the publishing of special editions in Greek established at Blackfriars. Not many books were issued as a result of this admirable plan, and the press itself does not seem to have survived the shock of the Civil Wars.



THE SEAL OF THE  
STATIONERS' COMPANY

## CHAPTER SEVEN : CHARLES I. AND THE COMMONWEALTH

THE story of the book trade throughout the reign of Charles I. is very largely a record of restriction and persecution. The plague, which played havoc with the trade at the time of his accession—leaving, as in earlier outbreaks, significant gaps in the Stationers' Register—was a small matter compared with the ecclesiastical tyranny now exercised over the press. Authors and publishers, comparatively speaking, had not had much to complain about in the matter of State control during the preceding reign, but with the predominance of Laud and his party under Charles I. they were harassed unmercifully. Most branches of literature were hard put to it to keep their heads above water in the new flood of theological writings, and few stationers, whether they were printers or publishers—or both—escaped a fine or imprisonment. They were not so cruelly used, however, as such authors as Alexander Leighton, the Scottish divine, who, besides being twice whipped and branded, had his ears cut off and his nose slit, and was kept in prison until the Long Parliament released him; and the more celebrated Puritan, William Prynne, whose "*Histrio-Mastix*," with its attack on stage plays and acting which was supposed to cast reflections on the morals of the Court—because the Queen herself had recently taken part in a masque!—was published by Michael Sparke in 1632. Prynne and his publisher were both thrown into prison, together with the two printers of the book, "*W. J.*" (William Jones) and "*E. A.*," though these last escaped further punishment. Brought up before the Star Chamber in February 1634, Prynne was sentenced to a fine of £5,000, to be degraded from the bar, to stand in the pillory at Westminster and Cheapside, where he was to have one of his ears cropped at each place, and to be imprisoned for life. An eye-witness of

## PRYNNE AND HIS PUBLISHERS

his punishment in the pillory at Cheapside says that while he stood there "they burnt his huge volumes under his nose, which had almost suffocated him." Sparke had to pay a fine of £500 and to stand in the pillory as well, but this was the extent of his punishment, though he had incensed the authorities and suffered imprisonment for similar offences on more than one previous occasion. Three years later the irrepressible Prynne found means to publish pseudonymously the tract, "Newes from Ipswich," which cost him his second fine of £5,000, together with the renewed degradation of the pillory, the loss of what remained of the stumps of his ears, and, most infamous of all, the mutilation of both cheeks with the letters "S. L."—" *Stigmata Laudis*," according to the grim humour of Prynne's own interpretation, though "seditious" or "scurrilous libeller" was the official meaning. Though ostensibly printed at Ipswich, the work was produced in London, John Lilburne being found guilty in February 1637 of printing and publishing this among several seditious books. Lilburne was condemned, says Timperley, to be whipped at the cart's tail to Old Palace Yard, Westminster; then set in the pillory there for two hours; afterwards to be carried back to the Fleet, there to remain until he conformed to the rules of the Court; also to pay a fine of £500 to the King; and, lastly, to give security for his good behaviour. He underwent the sentence with undismayed fortitude, uttering many bold speeches against the bishops, and dispersing many pamphlets from the pillory. The Star Chamber thereupon ordered him to be gagged, but, not to be suppressed, he proceeded to stamp with his feet. His rebellious spirit earned for him the name of Freeborn John, but Judge Jenkins summed up his quarrelsome disposition by saying that if he alone remained alive on the earth, "John would be against Lilburne and Lilburne against John."

It was in this same year of 1637—on July 11—that the Star Chamber, bent on repressing such obnoxious

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literature at all hazards, published the drastic decree concerning printing which preceded the darkest age in the history of the English book trade since Caxton set up his press at Westminster. This Act, while confirming existing ordinances, consisted of no fewer than thirty-three additional clauses, the former decrees, it states in its preamble, having "been found by experience to be defective in some particulars: And divers abuses have sithence arisen, and beene practised by the craft and malice of wicked and evill disposed persons, to the prejudice of the publicke; and divers libellous, seditious, and mutinous bookes have beene unduly printed, and other bookes and papers without licence, to the disturbance of the peace of the Church and State." The number of printers was reduced to twenty-three, including the King's printers and the printers allowed for the Universities; all books had to be licensed according to classification—law books, by the Lord Chief Justice and the Lord Chief Baron; all books of English history or other books of State affairs, by the principal Secretaries of State; works dealing with heraldry by the Earl Marshal; and all other books, "whether of divinitie, phisicke, philosophie, poetrie, or whatsoever, by the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of London, or the Chancellors or Vice-Chancellors of Oxford or Cambridge University." Every book had still to be entered in the Stationers' Register, and to bear the name of the printer, the author and the publisher. Native printers, however, were protected by a clause which prohibited the importation of English books printed abroad, and the interests of legitimate booksellers were also studied, in Clause X., with a consideration which would be most thankfully received by most members of the book trade of to-day: "That no haberdasher of small wares, ironmonger, chandler, shop-keeper, or any other person or persons whatsoever, not having beene seven yeares apprentice to the trade of a bookseller, printer, or book-binder, shall within the citie or suburbs

## UNDER THE STAR CHAMBER

of London, or in any other corporation, market-towne, or elsewhere, receive, take or buy, to barter, sell againe, change or do away, any Bibles, Testaments, Psalm-books, Primers, Abcees, Almanackes, or other booke or books whatsoever upon pain of forfeiture of all such books so received, bought or taken as aforesaid, and such other punishment of the parties so offending, as by this Court, or the said high Commission Court respectively, as the severall causes shall require, shall be thought meet" (Arber). To ensure good behaviour each of the master printers was bound in sureties of £300, and the penalties for all stationers and others who offended against this or any other decree of the kind included heavy fines, imprisonment, confiscation of stock, and such corporal punishment as a whipping at the cart's tail. One clause which caused a good deal of dissatisfaction was that which required not only first editions, but all reprints to be licensed, though in the case of reprints no fee was charged for registration, and printed copies only had to be submitted for inspection, instead of the two written copies demanded in the case of original works. The final clause marks another stage in the evolution of the custom, prevailing at the present day, of sending copies of all new works to the five great national and university libraries: "That whereas there is an agreement betwixt Sir Thomas Bodley, Knight, Founder of the University Library at Oxford, and the Master, Wardens, and Assistants of the Company of Stationers, *viz.*, That one Booke of every sort that is new printed, or reprinted with additions, be sent to the University of Oxford, for the use of the publicke Librarie there; the Court doth hereby Order, and declare, that every printer shall reserve one Book new printed, or reprinted by him, with additions, and shall before any publique venting of the said book, bring it to the Common Hall of the Companie of Stationers, and deliver it to the officer thereof to be sent to the Librarie at Oxford accordingly, upon paine of imprisonment, and such further Order



## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

and Direction therein, as to this Court, or the high Commission Court respectively, as the severall causes shall require, shall be thought fit" (Arber).

The formidable Decree of 1637 soon lost its effect under the gathering clouds of the Civil Wars, and when the Long Parliament abolished the Star Chamber in 1641 the Act became to all intents and purposes a dead letter. This was not at all to the liking of the Stationers' Company, which was virtually left for the time being not only powerless to act, but in serious danger of losing its privileges. The most law-abiding stationers under the old *régime* began to print and sell both books and pamphlets without troubling either to obtain a license or to enter them in the Company's Register, which now shows an average of scarcely more than one entry a week. The more lawless members seized the opportunity to trade in books belonging to the monopolists. "Within these last four years"—to quote from "The humble Remonstrance of the Company of Stationers" to Parliament in April 1643, eight months after Charles had raised his standard at Nottingham—"the affairs of the Presse have grown very scandalous and enormous, and all redresse is almost impossible, if power be not given by some binding order to reduce Presses and Apprentices to the proportion of those times which did precede these last four years. This is so farre from an Innovation that tis the removall of a dangerous Innovation, and without this removall, the Company of Stationers being like a feeld overpestred with too much stock, must needs grow indigent, and indigence must needs make it run into trespasses, and break out into divers unlawfull shifts; as Cattle use to do, when their pasture begins wholly to fail. Besides the same disorder which undoes Stationers by too great multitude of Presses and Apprentices among themselves, causes also Strangers, as Drapers, Carmen, and others to break in upon them, and set up Presses in divers obscure corners of the City and suburbs; so that not only the ruine of the Company is the more hastened

## THE STATIONERS' COMPANY IN DANGER

by it, but also the mischief,—which the State suffers by the irregularity of all, is the lesse remediable.”

Among other “considerations” offered in the same document, which fills nearly five pages in Prof. Arber’s great “Transcript,” is one modest paragraph of four lines pointing out the present discouragement to authors. “Many men’s Studies,” it observes, “carry no other profit or recompence with them but the benefit of their copies [copyrights]; and if this be taken away, many Pieces of great worth and excellence will be strangled in the womb, or never conceived at all for the future.” The crux of the whole matter, however, is contained in the closing paragraphs :

Besides, it will be a means to relieve the poverty of the Company of Stationers, and by that means remedy those many disorders which necessarily attend poverty ; and if any disorders happen, it will animate and sharpen Stationers to be zealous in detecting them, and bringing the offenders to condign punishment :

And as this may be truly said in defence of propriety, as it concerns private men in their Interests, so much more may be said for propriety of such Copies as the whole Company have a Right in, the good of so many hundreds being far more considerable then the good of any particular (which cannot be reputed a Monopoly, though of common and universall use, because common to the entire Profession). For since propriety has been confounded, and their Interest lost in those Copies which anciently belonged to them, the whole Company (whose chief, and almost sole Revenues and support, was the annuall benefit accrewing from their Copies now Printed from them) has drooped and grown poor. It is no common stock to provide Magazines of Corn, Arms, etc. for the States necessities, nor to pay Subsidies or other frequent Assessments, charged by Parliament ; nor to maintain their poor, being many, and requiring 200<sup>l</sup> per annum. And all the freehold they now have belonging to the Corporation, together with their Common-Seal, lyes at this present engaged for 1500<sup>l</sup>, borrowed lately at interest for the service of the Parliament. Nor have they so much as a Common-Hall of their own to assemble in ; nor can they any longer remain incorporate, or any way privileged by their Charter but must immediately moulder away, and dissolve without some redresse of this irregularity.

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

Parliament, as well as the Stationers' Company, had already taken alarm at the manner in which authors, printers and publishers made use of their new-found freedom, and, two months after receiving this Remonstrance, a new Ordinance was passed, "to prevent and suppress the license of printing." This Ordinance (with the omission of clauses relative to the printing of Parliamentary papers, and the printing, vending, and publishing of books belonging to the Company and other Stationers) is given by Masson in his *Life of Milton* as follows :

Whereas divers good orders have been lately made by both Houses of Parliament for suppressing the late great abuses and frequent disorders in printing many forged, scandalous, seditious, libellous and unlicensed Papers, Pamphlets and Books, to the great defamation of Religion and Government—which orders (notwithstanding the diligence of the Company of Stationers to put them in full execution) have taken little or no effect, by reason the Bill in preparation for the redress of the said disorders hath hitherto been retarded through the present distractions, and very many, as well Stationers and Printers, as others of sundry other professions not free of the Stationers' Company, have taken upon them to set up sundry private printing-presses in corners, and to print, vend, publish and disperse Books, Pamphlets and Papers, in such multitudes that no industry could be sufficient to discover or bring to punishment all the several abounding delinquents. . . . It is therefore ordered that no . . . Book, Pamphlet, Paper, nor part of any such Book, Pamphlet or Paper, shall from henceforth be printed, bound, stitched, or put to sale by any person or persons whatsoever, unless the same be first approved of and licensed under the hands of such person or persons as both or either of the said Houses shall appoint for the licensing of the same, and entered in the Register Book of the Company of Stationers according to ancient custom, and the Printer thereof to put his name thereto. . . . And the Master and Wardens of the said Company, the Gentleman-Usher of the House of Peers, the Sergeant of the Commons House, and their Deputies . . . are hereby authorised and required from time to time to make diligent search in all places where they shall think meet for all unlicensed printing-presses . . . and to seize and carry away such printing-presses . . . and likewise to make diligent search in

## A NEW ORDINANCE

all suspected printing-houses, warehouses, shops and other places . . . and likewise to apprehend all Authors, Printers, and other persons whatsoever employed in compiling, printing, stitching, binding, publishing and dispersing of the said scandalous, unlicensed and unwarrantable Papers, Books and Pamphlets . . . and to bring them afore either of the Houses, or the Committee of Examinations, that so they may receive such further punishments as their offences shall demerit. . . . And all Justices of the Peace, Captains, Constables and other officers, are hereby ordered and required to be aiding and assisting to the foresaid persons in the due execution of all and singular the premises, and in the apprehension of offenders against the same, and, in case of opposition, to break open doors and locks.—And it is further ordered that this Order be forthwith printed and published, to the end that notice may be taken thereof, and all contemnors of it left inexcusable.

As in the Star Chamber decree of 1637, censors were appointed for the various departments of literature, divinity being looked after by a staff of twelve divines, the *imprimatur* of any one of whom was sufficient; poetry, history, philosophy and other books of the kind were placed in the hands of Sir Nathaniel Brent, Judge of the Prerogative Court, John Langley, headmaster of St. Paul's School, and Mr. Farnabie. Books of heraldry were submitted to the three Herald Kings-at-Arms; law books to certain Judges and Sergeants-at-law; mathematical books, almanacks, and prognostications either to the Reader in Mathematics at Gresham College, or John Booker, the professional astrologer; while miscellaneous publications of small account were left to the discretion of the Clerk of the Stationers' Company.

This reactionary Ordinance, inspired by the very Presbyterians who, in other days, had been loudest in protesting against the wickedness of such restraints, had scarcely been issued when Milton's offending treatise on the "Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce" was ready for publication. Milton had already treated the earlier Decree with contempt by issuing his Anti-Episcopal pamphlets without leave or license from any one. The



## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

new Ordinance suffered a similar fate. The idea of any censorship over books, which left the decision as to what should be published, and what suppressed, in the hands of a few men, and these—as he wrote years afterwards—mostly unlearned and of common capacity, filled him with indignation. Disregarding the new Act—knowing indeed that there was little likelihood of persuading any of the new authorities to license the work—he sent forth his *Divorce* treatise without either official sanction or entry in the Stationers' Register. The Company at once took action both against this and another unlicensed work, but, though the matter was taken to Parliament, and referred to a Commons Committee on Printing, nothing came of it. Milton, however, did not intend to let the matter rest there. He took his revenge in the finest piece of prose that he ever wrote, the "*Areopagitica*," now one of the leading documents in the history of the liberty of the press. Milton seized the bull by the horns by addressing the "*Areopagitica*" to Parliament itself, and calling it "*A Speech for the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing*." It was published in 1644 in his own name, but unlicensed, and without the name of either printer or bookseller—a small quarto breathing throughout its forty pages the author's ennobling love of liberty—"which is the nurse of all great wits"—and letters. "As good almost kill a man as kill a good book," he writes in a celebrated passage, which reminds us of no one so much as that earlier book-lover, good Master Richard de Bury—"Who kills a man kills a reasonable creature, God's image; but he who destroys a good book, kills reason itself, kills the image of God, as it were, in the eye. Many a man lives a burden to the earth; but a good book is the precious life-blood of a master-spirit, embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life." Milton proceeds to pour out his eloquence on the lessons of the past, carrying them back to Ancient Rome and Athens, and reminding them that "this authentic Spanish policy of licensing books . . . was





WHERE GHOSTS OF EARLY BOOKSELLERS  
DWELL: A BIT OF LITTLE BRITAIN



## MILTON AND THE STATIONERS

the immediate image of a Star Chamber Decree to that purpose made in those times when that Court did the rest of those her pious works, for which she is now fallen from the Stars with Lucifer. . . . It may be doubted," he concludes, shrewdly enough, "there was in it the fraud of some old patentees and monopolizers in the trade of book-selling; who under pretence of the poor in their Company not to be defrauded, and the just retaining of each man his several copy (which God forbid should be gain-said) brought divers glossing colours to the house, which were indeed but colours, and serving to no end except it be to increase a superiority over their neighbours."

Anxious that he should not make his reputation solely as a pamphleteer, Milton, shortly after this, consented to the publication of the first collection of his Poems by Humphry Moseley, who issued the edition, revised for the press by Milton himself, on January 2, 1646. His first appearance as a poet, it is interesting to remember, was in the Second Folio Shakespeare, 1632, to which his lines, "On Shakespeare," were prefixed anonymously. Humphry Moseley, who published the 1646 volume, was evidently the instigator of the collection, as may be gathered from his own prefatory note:

### THE STATIONER TO THE READER

It is not any private respect of gain, gentle Reader—for the slightest Pamphlet is nowadays more vendible than the works of the learnedest men—but it is the love I have to our own language, that hath made me diligent to collect and set forth such pieces, both in prose and verse, as may renew the wonted honour and esteem of our English tongue; and it's the worth of these both English and Latin Poems, not the flourish of any prefixed encomions, that can invite thee to buy them—though these are not without the highest commendations and applause of the learnedest Academicks, both domestick and foreign, and amongst those of our own country the unparalleled attestation of that renowned Provost of Eton, Sir Henry Wootton. I know not thy palate how it relishes such dainties, nor how harmonious thy soul is: perhaps more trivial Airs may please thee better. But, howsoever thy opinion is spent upon these, that encouragement

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

I have already received from the most ingenious men, in their clear and courteous entertainment of Mr. Waller's late choice pieces, hath once more made me adventure into the world, presenting it with these ever-green and not to be blasted laurels. The Author's more peculiar excellency in these studies was too well known to conceal his papers or to keep me from attempting to solicit them from him. Let the event guide itself which way it will, I shall deserve of the age by bringing into the light as true a birth as the Muses have brought forth since our famous Spenser wrote ; whose poems in these English ones are as rarely imitated as sweetly excelled. Reader, if thou art eagle-eyed to censure their worth, I am not fearful to expose them to thy exactest perusal.

Thine to command, HUMPH. MOSELEY.

It was in this volume that Milton played his malevolent practical joke on the artist, William Marshall—"graver of heads for Moseley's books of poetry," as Horace Walpole describes him—who had been commissioned by the publishers to prepare the frontispiece portrait of the poet. The plate was atrociously done, and it is significant that Milton, apparently, had no power to prevent its appearance. His subtle and malicious revenge was to write four lines in Greek to accompany the design, which the artist, as innocent of their meaning as a new-born babe, gravely cut into the plate ; so that when the portrait duly appeared it bore, in the tablet beneath it, the poet's damning criticism, which Dr. Masson has translated as follows :

That an unskilful hand had carved this print  
You'd say at once, seeing the living face ;  
But, finding here no jot of me, my friends,  
Laugh at the botching artist's mis-attempt.

Moseley had his shop at the sign of the Prince's Arms, in St. Paul's Churchyard, and was the one stationer above all others who stood out conspicuously at that time as a publisher of poetry, and the miscellaneous class of literature, leisurely and elegant, politely known as "belles-lettres." When we remember how little was issued in pure literature in the troubled days of the mid-seventeenth

## MOSELEY'S BAND OF AUTHORS

century, his record in this respect is more than creditable : it is remarkable. He published most of Howell's works, including the "Familiar Letters," written, to a large extent, while this author was a Royalist prisoner in the Fleet, from 1643 to 1651 ; and the first printed edition of Edmund Waller's Poems, in 1645, just after that unworthy schemer had been banished for his share in the treacherous plot to seize London for Charles, when he saved his own miserable skin by turning informer against his fellow plotters. The poems had already had a wide circulation in manuscript form, and it was the success of the printed edition, if we may judge from the preface already quoted, that encouraged the publisher to perform a similar service for Milton's scattered verse. Moseley described his "Waller" as "printed and published according to order," but the second edition, published by Henry Herringman in 1664—after Waller had been pardoned by Cromwell's influence, and the Restoration had found him again sitting unabashed in the House of Commons—stated that the poems were "never till now corrected and published with the approbation of the author." By 1646, writes Dr. Masson, "Moseley had distinguished himself as the publisher of original editions of books, not only by Howell and Waller, but also by Milton, Davenant, Crashaw, and Shirley, and moreover as the ready purchaser of whatever copyrights were in the market of poems and plays by Beaumont and Fletcher, Webster, Ludwick Carlell, Shirley, Davenant, Killigrew, and other celebrities dead or living. To this group of Moseley's authors Cowley and Cartwright were soon added ; and it was not long before he snapped out of the hands of duller men Denham's Poems, Carew's Poems,\* various things of Sir Kenelm Digby, and every

\* The first edition of Carew's Poems was published by Thomas Walkley, "at the signe of the Flying Horse, between Brittain's Burse, and York House," in 1640. The second edition came from the same publisher in 1642, with eight additional poems, including one by Waller. Moseley published the third edition, which appeared in 1651.



## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

available copyright in any of the plays of Shakespeare, Massinger, Ford, Rowley, Middleton, Tourneur, or any other of the Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatists. For at least the ten years from 1644 onwards there was, I should say, no publisher in London comparable to Moseley for tact and enterprise."

To Dr. Masson's list should be added the works of Sir John Suckling, "the darling of the Court" of Charles I., the majority of which appeared in print for the first time in the "*Fragmenta Aurea*"—"published by a friend to perpetuate his memory" in 1646, four years after their author's death. This volume comprised Suckling's poems, his "*Letters to Divers Eminent Personages*," and three of his Plays, "*Brennoralt*," "*The Goblins*," and "*Auglaura*"—the tragi-comedy which the poet had produced in folio form in 1638 with margins so wide, and text so slim, that it provoked the ridicule of the wits, who declared that the type resembled a baby lying in the great bed at Ware. His fourth and unfinished play, "*The Sad One*," was published by Moseley in 1659 with a publisher's note to the reader, stating that he thought it better "to send it into the world in the same state I found it, without the least addition, than procure it supplied by any other pen. . . . I could not have answer'd myself, to the world," he concludes, "if I had suppressed this tragedy, and therefore may hope for some favour by its publication."

English literature would have been the poorer for a good many other pieces had it not been for worthy Humphry Moseley. In the same year as that of this first edition of "*The Sad One*" he published Suckling's "*Last Remains*," having obtained permission to transcribe them for that purpose from the poet's sister, Lady Southcot, in whose safe-keeping they had been left. "I could tell you," writes our publisher in his characteristic address from "*The Stationer to the Reader*," "what a thirst and general inquiry hath been after what I here present you, by all that have either seen or heard of them. And by that time you have read them, you will believe me,

## A HEADMASTER'S PRINTING PRESS

who have, now for many years, annually published the productions of the best wits of our own and foreign nations."

Milton, to step back a few years, had meantime been swept into the whirlpool of politics as Latin Secretary to the newly appointed Council of State (1649), writing in the same year the best known of his official papers, "Eikonoklastes," in reply to the famous "Eikon Basilike" of Charles I. (or John Gauden, Bishop of Worcester, as seems more likely), which, appearing at the time of the King's execution, had a sale so remarkable that some fifty editions of it are said to have been exhausted in the same year. The manuscript copy of this mysterious book was not received by Richard Royston, the royal bookseller, at the Angel, in Ivy Lane, until December 23, 1648, and great efforts were made to issue it before the King's execution at the end of the following month. It was printed by William Dugard, headmaster of Merchant Taylors School, where he had set up a private printing press; and the work was ready, if not immediately before the day of execution (January 30, 1649), at least immediately after, for we have it on Toland's authority that a copy was bought on January 31. It has been suggested that had this book appeared a week sooner it might have saved the King's life. Dugard shortly afterwards printed Salmasius's "Defensio Regia," whereupon the Council of State committed him to Newgate, turned his wife and family out of doors, seized all his printing plant, and ordered the Governors of the School to elect a new master. Subsequently Dugard made his peace with Parliament, and being reinstated at his school, and having his printing effects returned to him, he served the ruling powers with the loyalty which he had hitherto displayed for the Royalists. Among other things he printed Milton's official reply to Salmasius.

The book trade, as sensitive then as now to outside disturbance, was naturally affected during these years of strife. Most of the reading matter of the day took the form of controversial pamphlets or news-sheets, each side

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

having its own organs, published two or three times a week in the more stirring stages of the wars.\* But all pure literature, as we have shown, did not cease to issue from the press. Sir Thomas Browne, forced by the pirated editions of his "*Religio Medici*," which appeared in London in 1642, from an imperfect manuscript text—for though not intended for publication he had allowed it to be copied by one friend after another—issued the first authorised edition in 1643. Nothing shows the effrontery of these crafty publishers of the seventeenth century better than the circumstances surrounding the publication of the "*Religio Medici*." The publisher in question was Andrew Crooke, who was no mere pirate in a small way of business, but one of the principal members of the Stationers' Company. As already mentioned he had a share in the second folio of Ben Jonson's Works, and he took over in 1637, with John Legatt, jun., most of the copyrights left by Robert Allott, including his part in Shakespeare's Works, John Earle's "*Microcosmography*," Sir John Harington's "*Epigrams*," Sir Thomas Overbury's "*Wife*," and his share in Wither's Poems. Crooke also possessed, among other things, a twelfth part in Camden's "*Britannia*," the "copies" of six plays of Richard Brome, and shared with William Cooke and others at least nine plays of James Shirley. Coming into possession of a manuscript copy of the "*Religio Medici*," he published two unauthorised and anonymous editions in 1642, and only communicated with the author to inform him that Sir Kenelm Digby was writing animadversions on the work. Thereupon Sir

\* It was due to the diligence and indefatigable pains of a bookseller that we possess at this day—in the British Museum—the remarkable series formerly described as the "King's Pamphlets," but now better known as the "Thomason Collection." George Thomason, who had these ephemeral publications bound into nearly 2000 volumes, and preserved them through many vicissitudes, kept his shop at the sign of the Rose and Crown in St. Paul's Churchyard. He does not seem to have prospered as a bookseller, for when he died in 1666 he is said to have been buried "out of Stationers' Hall (a poore man)."

## SIR THOMAS BROWNE'S PUBLISHER

Thomas Browne wrote to Digby the letter which is now printed with the "*Religio Medici*," and, notwithstanding Crooke's behaviour in the earlier editions, supplied him with the revised text for the authorised version. This appeared in the spring of 1643, Crooke being quite ready to announce it as "a true and full copy of that which was most imperfectly and surreptitiously printed before." This piece, writes Sir Thomas, in his prefatory letter to Digby, "contrived in my private study, and as an exercise unto myself, rather than excitation for any other, having past from my hand under a broken and imperfect copy, by frequent transcription it still runs forward into corruption, and after the addition of some things, omission of others, and transposition of many, without my assent or privacy the liberty of these times committed it unto the press; whence it issued so disguised, the author without distinction could not acknowledge it." Common justice compels us to perpetuate the name of the pirate who had thus forced Sir Thomas's hand; and let us not be unthankful that the "*Religio Medici*" has come down to us even by such dubious means as those employed by the barefaced Crooke.

Other famous works continued to make their appearance in spite of the storm and stress of national affairs. We have already referred to several of the authors who issued their best, if not their all, during the period covered by the Civil Wars, the Commonwealth and the Protectorate—Shirley, Fuller, Cowley, Denham, and others—and to them may be added Thomas Hobbes, who published his "*Leviathan*" in the summer of 1651; Jeremy Taylor, who wrote and issued his best work before the Restoration; Sir William Dugdale, the first handsome folio of whose "*Monasticon Anglicanum*" came from the press of Richard Hodgkinson in 1655; Brian Walton, whose great Polyglot Bible (1657) is the finest monument we possess of seventeenth-century printing, and the second English book to be published by subscription; and Izaak Walton, whose "*Compleat Angler*" made its first

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

appearance in 1653, the year in which Oliver Cromwell was first installed Protector of the Commonwealth. The following advertisement has been preserved of the first edition of "The Compleat Angler":

There is published a Booke of Eighteen-pence, called the Compleat Angler, or the Contemplative man's Recreation; being a Discourse on Fish and Fishing. Not unworthy the perusal of most anglers. Sold by Richard Marriot in St. Dunstan's Church-yard, Flete-street.

Gentle Izaak Walton, a quiet man and a follower of peace, "as most anglers are," was sixty when this advertisement appeared. He had long since retired from Fleet Street, and the noisy neighbourhood of St. Dunstan's, where once he had carried on his business as a linen-draper, in the close friendship of Dr. Donne, Vicar of the parish, as well as Dean of St. Paul's, whose life he had written thirteen years before. He lived long enough to see his "Compleat Angler" "this book of eighteen-pence"—a single copy of which fetched no less than £1,085 at Sotheby's during the Amherst sale of March 1909—run into four editions. He little dreamt that before the end of the nineteenth century it would have been reprinted considerably more than a hundred times.

It was Richard Marriot of St. Dunstan's Churchyard, appropriately enough, who published the first separate edition of Walton's life of Donne—originally written as a preface to the first folio of the poet-dean's Sermons (1640), and who subsequently reissued it in the first collection of Walton's "Lives" (1670), which ran into its fourth edition in the next five years. The earliest surviving edition of Donne's poems\* was issued from the same shop in St. Dunstan's Churchyard in 1633, by John Marriot, presumably Richard's father, who published there until 1640. Strong efforts were made by Donne's

\* In a letter to his friend Sir Henry Goodere, written towards the close of 1614, Donne mentioned that he was about to issue a small private edition of poems—"not for much public view," as he expresses it, "but at mine own cost." Unfortunately no copy of this edition can now be traced.



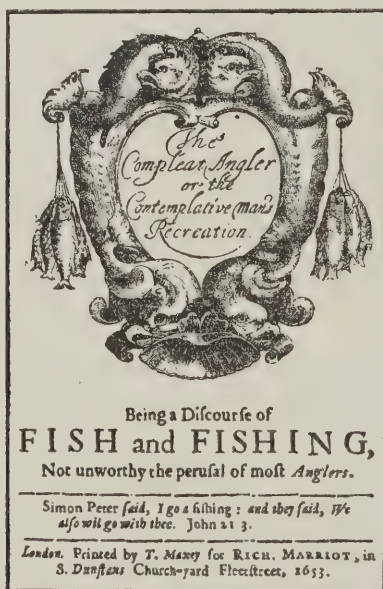
## FATHER AND SON

son to suppress this edition, as well as a similar volume of Donne's "Juvenilia"—both posthumous productions—on account of the looser pieces of the poet's youth, which scandalised not a few of the great dean's ardent admirers. In a letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury dated December 16, 1637, John Donne the younger begs him to take the matter in hand, and punish the publishers for daring to issue poems which he protests were none of his father's. "Of which abuses," he writes, "they have been often warned by your petitioner, and tolde that if they desisted not they should be proceeded against before your Grace, which they seem so much to slight, that they professe suddainly to publish new impressions, verie much to the greife of your petitioner,—and the discredite of ye memorie of his Father." \* Had John Donne the younger not been the hateful man that he was—and his clerical cloth made him the more despicable—it is obvious that a good deal might be said from his point of view regarding this disreputable business. Donne's son, though admitted to holy orders about this time, was already notorious for his profligate habits, and his character never seems to have possessed a single redeeming feature. The hypocrisy of his "greife" is apparent when we find him issuing through Henry Herringman in 1669 not only all the pieces complained of in Marriot's edition of his father's poems, but "divers copies under his own hand never before printed," including a number of contributions which the dean must have repented of in his virtuous old age as sincerely as of anything else that he wrote in his unregenerate youth, before embarking on his distinguished career as a divine. John Donne the younger probably came to some mercenary arrangement with the original publishers of the poems, for, within a year or two of his letter to the Archbishop, Marriot came out with an edition practically identical with that which he had published before. Donne's son

\* Published by Dr. Grosart for the first time in his edition of Donne's poems in the Fuller Worthies' Library, 1873.

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

showed himself in his true colours in 1653, when he reprinted a translation of his father's "Conclave Ignatii" as a newly discovered work of the dean's, and recently translated by Jasper Maine, though he himself had suppressed an edition of exactly the same English version which had been published nineteen years before. He left manuscripts of his own which, from all accounts, are unspeakably obscene, and succeeded in publishing one volume of his indecencies only six months before his death in 1662.



REDUCED FROM THE TITLE-  
PAGE OF THE FIRST EDITION OF  
"THE COMPLEAT ANGLER," 1653

## CHAPTER EIGHT : THE RESTORATION AND THE REVOLUTION

THE Restoration not only brought a renewal of the censorship, but introduced to the book trade the famous and indefatigable Roger L'Estrange, who, not content with disturbing every individual connected with the press, had designs on the Stationers' Company itself. The Licensing Act of 1662, in which the Royal prerogative was strongly reasserted, was a crushing blow to the time-honoured administrative powers of the Company, whose interests were practically ignored by it, a new office being created in the following year under the title of "Surveyor of the Imprimery and Printing Presses." The number of printers at work in London, which had then grown to sixty, was again reduced to twenty, and most of the clauses of the Star Chamber decree of 1627 were reinforced. The new Act and its administration were hotly debated, and led, among other things, to a petition from the Stationers' Company to the effect that their ancient privilege of controlling unruly members and searching for unlicensed books might be restored to them. Roger L'Estrange was appointed to inquire into the whole matter, and on June 3, 1663, he published his "Considerations and Proposals in order to the Regulation of the Press," addressed to Charles II.—a long-winded document full of immoderate denunciations of the Stationers, "for they are the principal authors of those mischiefs which they pretend now to redress," he writes, "and the very persons against whom the penalties of this intended regulation are chiefly levelled." The same arguments, he maintains, hold good against the printers, between whom and the stationers a distinct line was now drawn. "To conclude," he adds, "both printers and stationers, under colour of offering a service to the publike, do effectually but design one upon another. The printers would beat down the book-

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

selling trade by managing the press as themselves please, and by working upon their own copies. The stationers, on the other side, they would subject the printers to be absolutely their slaves; which they have effected in a large measure already, by so encreasing the number, that the one half must either play the knave or starve." This tribute to the triumph of the stationer, or bookseller, over the printer, who, in the earliest days of the press, had matters much his own way, corroborates the older statements of Christopher Barker and George Wither and explains the abortive attempt made by eleven of the leading London printers either in 1660 or 1661 to found a new Company, independent of the Stationers, to look after their own special interests.\* Evelyn will be found to bear later and similar testimony on p. 162. L'Estrange was not content with the ordinary penalties which he found available for inflicting upon his offenders, such as death, mutilation, the pillory, stocks, whipping, carting, stigmatizing, "standing under the gallows with a rope about the neck at a publique execution," and a sufficient variety of other punishments, one would have thought, even for a man of his catholic taste. He had, however, a great idea of making the punishment fit the crime; or making the penalty, as he expresses it, "bear proportion to the malice." So, with an ingenuity which Sir William Gilbert himself might envy, he proceeded to draw up a list of suggestions:

In some cases, they may be condemn'd to wear some visible badge, or mark of ignominy, as a halter instead of a hatband, one stocking blew and another red; a blew bonnet with a red T or S upon it, to denote the crime to be either treason or sedition: and if at any time the person so condemned shall be found without the said badge or marque during the time of his obligation to wear it, let him incurre some further penalty, provided only

\* Some interesting light is thrown on this movement by Mr. Henry R. Plomer, in his admirable "Short History of English Printing" (1900). He explains that it was the same band of men who framed the "Companie of Printers" for whom in 1663 was issued a pamphlet entitled "A Brief Discourse concerning Printers and Printing," in which they make the





SIR ROGER L'ESTRANGE

*After the portrait by Sir Godfrey Kneller*





## HOW L'ESTRANGE RULED THE PRESS

that if within the said time he shall discover and seize, or cause to be seized, any author, printer, or stationer, liable at the time of that discovery and seizure, to be proceeded against for the matter of treasonous or seditious pamphlets, the offender aforesaid shall, from the time of that discovery, be discharged from wearing it any longer.

L'Estrange himself admits that these proposals may seem "phantastique," but there are many men, he very shrewdly adds, "who had rather suffer any other punishment than be made publicly ridiculous." L'Estrange was obviously too good a man to be wasted ; besides, his unflinching loyalty to the King in the darkest days of his exile, had long cried out for adequate recompense ; so on August 15, 1663, he was appointed to succeed Sir John Birkenhead as "Surveyor of the Imprimery," with similar police powers to those previously held by the Stationers' Company. In addition he was one of the licensers of the press, and had the sole privilege of printing and publishing anything in the shape of a newspaper or public advertisement. Until the outbreak of the Plague, when it was mercifully allowed to lapse, the new Act, under L'Estrange, was more rigorously enforced than the short-lived Star Chamber decree of 1637. The energetic Surveyor took to making midnight raids on printing houses, and had not been many months in office before he caused the arrest and execution of John Twyn—he was hanged, drawn, and quartered—for printing a pamphlet entitled "A Treatise on the Execution of Justice," described as "a seditious, scandalous, and poisonous book," and alleged to form part of a plot against the King's life and government. This was not, however, as some one has stated, "the first time in English history" that "a printer suffered the penalty of death for the very complaints against the booksellers repeated by L'Estrange in his own "Considerations and Proposals." According to Mr. Plomer the Act of 1662 itself was mainly based on this report, which L'Estrange, who had been granted a warrant in February 1662 to suppress unlicensed presses and seditious books, laid before Parliament long before it was printed in pamphlet form.

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

liberty of the press," for William Carter, as we have shown, was done to death in the same horrible way eighty years before, in Great Eliza's day. Thomas Brewster, bookseller, was charged at the same time as Twyn with publishing "The Speeches and Prayers of Harrison, Cook, Hugh Peters, and others condemned for the murder of the late King," and another pamphlet entitled "The Phoenix ; or Solemn League and Covenant," and though he pleaded ignorance in his defence, alleging that booksellers did not read the things they sold, he was told by Sir Robert Hyde, Chief Justice of the King's Bench, that that excuse was no answer in law. Simon Dover, printer, and Nathan Brooks, bookbinder, were charged with him for similar misdemeanours, but Brewster's offence being double, he was singled out for special warning. He was further told to consider himself fortunate in escaping capital punishment, the judgment in his case—and it is worth giving in full as printed by Timperley—being as follows :

That you shall pay to the King, for these offences committed, an hundred marks : And for you, Simon Dover and Nathan Brooks, you shall pay either of you a fine of forty marks to the King. You shall each of you severally stand upon the pillory from eleven to one of the clock in one place at the Exchange, and another day (the same space of time) in Smithfield ; and you shall have a paper set over your hats, declaring your offence, for printing and publishing scandalous, treasonable, and factious books against the King and State. You shall be committed till the next gaol delivery without bail ; and then you shall make an open confession and acknowledgment of your offences in such words as shall be directed you. And afterwards you shall remain prisoners during the King's pleasure : And when you are discharged you shall put in good security by recognizances, yourself £400 a-piece, and two securities each of you £200 a-piece, not to print or publish any books but such as shall be allowed. And this is the judgment of the Court.

Worse disasters fell upon the book trade than the appointment of Roger L'Estrange. The plague of 1665 ruthlessly thinned the ranks of all classes of stationers,

## PEPYS'S BOOKSELLER "UTTERLY UNDONE"

and with the withdrawal of the Court to Oxford,\* and the wholesale flight of the citizens, the trade was brought practically to a standstill. Then, in the following year, came the more sweeping disaster of the Great Fire, which, in addition to other bookselling quarters, wiped out the very centre of the trade in St. Paul's Churchyard. Here the booksellers lost an immense stock of books, which they had stored for safety in the vaults of the church. "I hear," says Pepys, on September 26 of this year, "the great loss of books in St. Paul's Church-yard, and at their Hall also, which they value at about £150,000; some booksellers being wholly undone, and among others, they say, my poor Kirton"—Joseph Kirton being the bookseller in St. Paul's Churchyard of whom we hear a good deal in the course of Pepys's "Diary."† Later he learnt that poor Kirton was "utterly undone, and made £2,000 or £3,000 worse than nothing, from being worth £7,000 or £8,000." All the great booksellers, he was told, had been similarly ruined; "not only these, but their warehouses at their Hall, and under Christ Church, and elsewhere, being all burned. A great want there will be of books," he adds, "specially Latin books and foreign books; and, among others, the Polyglottes‡ and new Bible, which he believes will be presently worth £40 a-piece." Evelyn expresses the same fear in a letter to the Earl of Clarendon, not long before the Lord Chancellor's downfall.

\* It was during this stay at Oxford that Arlington, the Lord Chamberlain, licensed the publication of the "Oxford Gazette," notwithstanding the exclusive privilege held by L'Estrange, who now had two similar sheets running in London—the "Intelligencer," published on Mondays, and the "News," which appeared on Thursdays. The Oxford rival was produced bi-weekly and reprinted in London, where, upon the King's return to his capital, it became the "London Gazette," effectually silencing L'Estrange's publication, and continuing its useful existence down to the present day.

† The Diaries of both Pepys and Evelyn remained in manuscript until the nineteenth century, when they made their first appearance in print within seven years of each other—Evelyn's in 1818, and Pepys's in 1825. Henry Colburn was the publisher in each case.

‡ Walton's Polyglot Bible, referred to on p. 153.

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

Since the late deplorable conflagration [he writes], in which the stationers have been exceedingly ruined, there is like to be an extraordinary penury and scarcity of classic authors, &c., used in our grammar schools; so that of necessity they must suddenly be reprinted. My Lord may please to understand that our booksellers follow their own judgment in printing the antient authors according to such text as they found extant when first they entered their copy, whereas out of MSS. collated by the industry of later critics, those authors are exceedingly improved. . . . The cause of this is principally the stationer driving as hard and cruel a bargain with the printer as he can; and the printer, taking up any smatterer in the tongues, to be the lesse losser; an exactness in this in no wayes importing the stipulation: by which meanes errors repeate and multiply in every edition, and that most notoriously in some most necessary schole-bookes of value, which they obtrude upon the buyer, unless men will be at unreasonable rates for forraigne editions. Your Lordship does by this perceive the mischievous effects of this avarice and negligence in them.

Evelyn then considers what might be done to remedy this condition of things. First, he suggests an inspection as to what texts of the Greek and Latin authors should be followed in future editions. Secondly, that a censor be established to see that all printers are adequately provided with able correctors of the press. Thirdly, that the whole cost be borne by the Stationers' Company. He considers the time ripe for such a move, for "this sad calamity has mortified a Company which was exceedingly haughty and difficult to manage to any usefull reformation."

Evelyn plainly had no merciful doubts about striking an enemy when he was down; for if the stationers needed any chastening—and no doubt many of them did—they had surely had their full share of it during the last two years. Apart from their private sufferings they had experienced a grievous loss in the destruction of their Hall, with their original Charter and other irrecoverable treasures. Most fortunately the registers escaped. This was the third hall owned by London stationers, for they appear to have possessed a home of their own, as an



## STATIONERS' HALL

ordinary Brotherhood, somewhere in or near Milk Street before their incorporation in Mary's reign. "The supposed site of the first hall," writes Mr. C. R. Rivington, in his brief but useful "Records," is still in the possession of the Company." The second hall, to which a move was made some time before 1570, was probably on the south side of St. Paul's Churchyard, but this was leased in 1606 to a vintner who turned it into a tavern. Five years later the partners in the English Stock bought Abergavenny House, lying back between Amen Corner and Ave Maria Lane, and converted it into a hall for the Company's use. When it had to be rebuilt in 1654, being then hopelessly out of repair, the Company settled the cost by the sale of Foxe's "Book of Martyrs," the copyright of which had come into its possession many years before, and was still of very great value. Perhaps it was this precedent which suggested, early in the following century, the building of the new home of the University Press at Oxford out of the profits from Clarendon's "History of the Rebellion." It was not until 1670 that the Stationers appointed a Committee to rebuild the hall, and four years later we hear of Stephen College—"the protestant joiner" afterwards executed at Oxford—being commissioned to wainscot the new building for the sum of £300. His clever work is still to be seen there, in an excellent state of preservation.

One notable bookseller of this period was Robert Scot, of Little Britain, who is mentioned by Roger North as supplying Dr. John North, Professor of Greek and Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, with much useful information about books and the best editions of the classics:

This Mr. Scot was, in his time, the greatest librarian in Europe; for, besides his stock in England, he had warehouses at Frankfort, Paris, and other places, and dealt by factors. After he was grown old and much worn by multiplicity of business, he began to think of his ease and to leave off. Whereupon he contracted with one Mills of St. Paul's Churchyard near 10,000*l.* deep, and articed

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

not to open his shop any more. But Mills, with his auctioneering, atlases, and projects, failed, whereby poor Scot lost above half his means. But he held to his contract of not opening his shop, and, when he was in London, for he had a country house, passed most of his time at his house amongst the rest of his books; and his reading (for he was no mean scholar) was the chief entertainment of his time. He was not only an expert bookseller, but a very conscientious good man; and when he threw up his trade, Europe had no small loss of him. Our doctor, at one lift, bought of him a whole set of Greek classics in folio, of the best editions. This sunk his stock at that time; but afterwards, for many years of his life, all that he could (as they say) rap or run went the same way. But the progress was small; for such a library as he desired, compared with what the pittance of his stock would purchase, allowing many years to the gathering, was of desperate expectation.\*

It was in March of the year following the Great Fire—which burnt his own birthplace—that Milton, who had long since resigned his political hopes, and settled down to his great life-work as a poet, signed the celebrated agreement with Samuel Simmons for the publication of “Paradise Lost.” His old publisher, Humphry Moseley, had died six years before, and the struggle for supremacy in the trade thereafter rested with Richard Marriot (or Marriott), whom we have already seen in St. Dunstan’s Churchyard, and Henry Herringman, who had a share in the Third Folio Shakespeare, issued the first authorised edition of Waller’s Poems, one or two of Milton’s early pamphlets, the three obituary panegyrics on Oliver Cromwell by Marvell, Dryden, and Sprat, first editions of Cowley and Denham, and many other works of the kind. “On the whole, at the time of Moseley’s death,” writes Dr. Masson, who made a special study of the book trade in Milton’s day, “while the advantage was with Herringman, Marriott’s chances were considerable; and the publication from his shop of the first part of ‘Hudibras’ in 1662 was another incident in his favour. Somehow he could not follow up that success. The second part

\* Roger North’s “Life of the Hon. and Rev. Dr. John North,” 1744.

## BOOKSELLERS OF THE RESTORATION

of 'Hudibras,' a year after the first, was not published by him, but by Martin and Allestree; and though he published the poems of Mrs. Katherine Philips instead, that was a poor substitute. Meanwhile, Herringman had been gaining ground remarkably. Already in possession of Davenant, Lord Orrey, Sir Robert Howard, and Dryden, he had brought round him also Cowley and Boyle, having published the essays of both in 1661, and a volume of Cowley's poems in 1663. In April 1664 he acquired the copyright of all Waller's poetry; and from that time his superiority to Marriott, and his title to be regarded as Moseley's successor in the primacy of the book trade, admitted of no dispute. He was to publish more and more for Waller, for Howard, for Dryden, and for other poets and dramatists; the scientific connexion he had won through Boyle drew round him the chiefs of the Royal Society as well as the wits of the Court; 'Hudibras' and the poems of Mrs. Katherine Philips were to be his when he chose; and, whenever any stock of old plays and poems was in the market, and especially when Anne Moseley, withdrawing from business, wished to dispose of any of her late husband's copyrights in such things, who so ready to purchase as Herringman? In fact Herringman and his shop are one of the most vivid traditions of the Restoration. The shop was 'at the sign of the Blue Anchor in the Lower Walk of the New Exchange,' this New Exchange, so called to distinguish it from the Old Exchange in the city, being on the south side of the Strand, on the site of the present Adelphi. Any time before the Great Plague and the Great Fire, but perhaps more distinctly after those events than before, this shop of Herringman's was the chief literary lounging-place in London."

Samuel Simmons, whose address was "next door to the Golden Lion in Aldersgate Street," was practically a beginner, without any record or distinction behind him, but it is probable that he was a son of the late Matthew Simmons, of the same address, who had published Milton's

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

"Eikonoklastes," as well as several of his earlier tracts, and had become official printer to the Commonwealth during the first year of Milton's secretaryship. "Paradise Lost" may have gone to Samuel Simmons, therefore, for old associations' sake. The agreement itself is printed by Masson, as follows. There were, of course, as he points out, two copies, and it is the copy signed for Milton by proxy, and kept by Simmons, that has been preserved:

These Presents, made the 27th day of Aprill 1667, Betweene John Milton, gent., of thone ptie, and Samuel Symons, Printer, of thother ptie, Wittness :—That the said John Milton, in consideration of five pounds to him now paid by the said Samm<sup>ll</sup>. Symons and other the considerations herein mentioned, hath given, granted, and assigned, and by these pnts doth give, grant, and assigne, unto the said Sam<sup>ll</sup>. Symons, his executors and assignes, All that Booke, Copy, or Manuscript of a Poem intituled Paradise Lost, or by whatsoever other title or name the same is or shalbe called or distinguished, now lately Licensed to be printed, Together with the full benefitt, profitt, and advantage thereof, or w<sup>h</sup>. shall or may arise thereby. And the said John Milton, for him, his ex<sup>rs</sup>. and ad<sup>s</sup>., doth covenant with the said Sam<sup>ll</sup>. Symons, his ex<sup>rs</sup>. and ass<sup>ns</sup>., That hee and they shall at all tymes hereafter have, hold, and enjoy the same, and all Impressions thereof accordingly, without the lett or hinderance of him, the said John Milton, his ex<sup>rs</sup>. or ass<sup>ns</sup>., or any pson or psons by his or their consent or privitie, And that the said Jo. Milton, his ex<sup>rs</sup>. or ad<sup>s</sup>. or any other by his or their meanes or consent, shall not print or cause to be printed, or sell, dispose, or publish, the said Booke or Manuscript, or any other Booke or Manuscript of the same tenor or subject, without the consent of the said Sam<sup>ll</sup>. Symons, his ex<sup>rs</sup>. and ass<sup>ns</sup>.. In consideration whereof, the said Sam<sup>ll</sup>. Symons, for him, his ex<sup>rs</sup>. and ad<sup>s</sup>., doth covenant with the said John Milton, his ex<sup>rs</sup>. and ad<sup>s</sup>., the sum of five pounds of lawfull english money at the end of the first Impression which the said Sam<sup>ll</sup>. Symons, his ex<sup>rs</sup>. or ass<sup>ns</sup>., shall make and publish of the said Copy or Manuscript ; Which impression shalbe accounted to be ended when thirteene hundred Books of the said whole Copy or Manuscript imprinted shalbe sold and retaild off to pticular reading Customers ; And shall also pay other five pounds unto the said Mr. Milton, or his ass<sup>ns</sup>., at the end of the second Impression, to be accounted as aforesaid ;



This Present Made the 27<sup>th</sup> day of April 1667 Between John Milton of London  
 and Samuel Symonds Printer of the City of London that the said John Milton in consideration  
 of five pounds to him now paid by the said Sam<sup>l</sup> Symonds, either the residue and profits  
 thereof that shall grow and accrue, and by the said John Milton's gift and assign-  
 unto the said Sam<sup>l</sup> Symonds his assigns and assigns All that Book Copy or  
 Manuscript of a Latin intituled Paradise Lost, or by whatsoever title or name  
 the said Book or shall called or distinguished now lately printed to be printed  
 the said John Milton for him his heirs or assigns doth Covenant and  
 the said Sam<sup>l</sup> Symonds his assigns doth Covenent that the said Book shall at all times  
 hereafter have and enjoy the same and all impressions thereof and  
 not give the said Book or hinderance of him the said John Milton or his heirs or assigns  
 or print by or for the said Sam<sup>l</sup> Symonds or assigns. And that the said John Milton his heirs  
 or assigns or any other by his or their assigns or consent shall not print or cause  
 to be printed or sold or expose or publish the said Book or Manuscript or  
 any other Book or Manuscript of the said Book or subject without the consent of  
 the said Sam<sup>l</sup> Symonds his assigns or assigns. In consideration whereof the said Sam<sup>l</sup>  
 Symonds for him his heirs or assigns doth Covenant with the said John Milton his heirs  
 and assigns to pay unto the said John Milton his heirs or assigns the sum of five  
 pounds of lawfull English money at the end of the first Impression which he for  
 the said Sam<sup>l</sup> Symonds his assigns shall make and publish of the said Copy or Manu-  
 script. Which Impression shall amount to be ended within thirtie months  
 of the said Book or Manuscript impainted shall be and extend of  
 to singular reading furnished. And shall also pay other five pounds unto the said  
 Milton or his assigns at the end of the second Impression to be accounted as afore-  
 said five pounds more at the end of the third Impression to be in his account  
 amount. And that the said three first Impressions shall not be sold  
 suffered printed or otherwise of the said whole Copy or Manuscript  
 a piece, and further that the said Samuel Symonds and his assigns doth  
 and shall be ready to make either conveying his or their forwardage and  
 costs of or returning the same of the said Copy or Manuscript  
 by post or otherwise whereby the said John Milton is to be intitled by the said  
 money from time to time with every reasonable request in that behalf  
 in default thereof shall pay the said five pounds agreed to be paid upon  
 days Impression as aforesaid as if the same were due, and in case  
 thereof the said John Milton or his assigns shall have to the said John Milton  
 Intimation by the said John Milton or his assigns the day of years first above written

Given and Delivered in the  
 presence of us.

John Fisher  
 Benjamin Greene scribe to  
 Milton

John Milton 

FACSIMILE OF MILTON'S AGREEMENT WITH  
 HIS PUBLISHER FOR "PARADISE LOST"  
 The original is now in the British Museum





## AGREEMENT FOR "PARADISE LOST"

And five pounds more at the end of the third Impression, to be in like manner accounted; And that the said three first Impressions shall not exceed fifteene hundred Books or volumes of the said whole Copy or Manuscript a peice: And further, That he the said Samuel Symons, and his ex<sup>rs</sup>, ad<sup>s</sup>, and ass<sup>ns</sup>, shalbe ready to make oath before a Master in Chancery concerning his or their knowledge and beleife of or concerning the truth of the disposing and selling the said Books by Retail, as aforesaid, whereby the said Mr. Milton is to be intitled to his said money from time to time, upon every reasonable request in that behalfe, or in default thereof shall pay the said five pounds agreed to be paid upon each Impression, as aforesaid, as if the same were due, and for and in lieu thereof.—In witness whereof the said pties have to this writing indented interchangeably sett their hands and seales, the day and yeare first abovewritten.

JOHN MILTON.

Sealed and delivered in the  
presence of us,

JOHN FISHER,

BENJAMIN GREENE, ser<sup>t</sup>. to Mr. Milton.\*

On the face of it, it seems an iniquitous bargain that Milton should receive for such a stupendous achievement as "Paradise Lost" the miserable sum of £5 down, with the promise of a further £5 when the first edition was exhausted, and two similar sums at the end of the second

\* The original [writes Dr. Masson] is in the British Museum, having been presented to that collection in 1852 by Samuel Rogers, the poet, who had purchased it in 1831, for a hundred guineas, from Mr. Pickering, the publisher. It had come down in the possession of the famous publishing family of the Tonsons, who had acquired part copyright of "Paradise Lost" in 1683 and the whole before 1691, and had thus got into their hands this evidence of the original sale. Notwithstanding the vague history of the document between 1767 and 1824, there is not the least doubt as to its genuineness. It is the actual copy of the agreement as kept by Simmons. But there has been a general mistake as to the signature. The poet Rogers, who was proud of the relic, never doubted, when he showed it to his friends, that the signature was Milton's own; most of those who now look at the relic in the British Museum never doubt it. Most certainly, however, the signature is not Milton's own, but a signature written for him by some one else, and certified by the touch of Milton's finger and by the annexed Milton family seal of the Spread Eagle. This might have occurred to any one on reflecting that Milton in 1667 had been fifteen years totally blind.

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

and third editions, if called for. But a number of not unimportant points must be remembered before passing judgment on the publisher. In 1667 £5 would be equal to about £17 10s. in our present money, and as Milton himself received one further sum of £5, for a second edition was already demanded by the spring of 1669, his returns, in present-day reckoning, would amount to about £35. In 1680, six years after the poet's death, his widow resigned the full copyright to Simmons for a third and final payment of £8—equal now to some £28, so that the publisher paid for "Paradise Lost" sums which, all told, would amount at the present time to £63: still wretchedly inadequate, but hardly warranting all the abuse that has been heaped on the publisher's head by succeeding generations of authors. It must not be forgotten, too, that when Milton ventured from his retirement with "Paradise Lost" he was not exactly every publisher's choice. His name still stank in the nostrils of the Royalists as that of a hated Republican, and author of "Eikonoklastes"; if he had been mentioned at all since the Restoration it was but as "that serpent Milton," or in an expression of regret that he had not been either hanged with the Regicides or at least sent with some of them to lifelong imprisonment. It is not impossible that he took "Paradise Lost" to Herringman, who, like Simmons, had escaped the fire, or some other leading publisher, and could only find Simmons willing to take the risk. Simmons, as it happened, made by "Paradise Lost," according to Dr. Masson's calculation, about five or six times as much as he paid its author—a vastly disproportionate return, it is true, but he seems to have worked uncommonly hard—and with striking success—to get the book firmly established. At least nine successive bindings, and a curious variety of title-pages, were issued before the first edition was exhausted, the publisher's plan, to judge from the number of booksellers who figure as his agents in the various imprints, being to scatter the edition as widely over the town as possible. Among these booksellers it is

## MILTON AND HIS PUBLISHERS

interesting to find the name of Peter Parker, who was presently associated with Thomas Guy in the printing of Oxford Bibles, and whose address is given as "under Creed Church, near Aldgate." Another of the booksellers mentioned is H. Morlock, who had one of the book-stalls in Westminster Hall, part of which was taken up in those days not only by booksellers, but by sempstresses and dealers in toys. "Paradise Lost" was first published in or about August 1667, at three shillings—equal now to about half a sovereign—and proof that author and publisher had succeeded in working off the first edition by April 26, 1669, is given in Milton's receipt of that date for his second £5.

Sandwiched in between this great epic and "Paradise Regained," with which was bound up the sacred drama of "Samson Agonistes," came, of all incongruous pieces, the poet's unimportant little Latin Grammar, "Printed for S. S. [doubtless Samuel Simmons] and are to be sold by John Starkey at the Miter in Fleet Street, near Temple-bar, 1669." The fragment of Milton's "History of Britain" also came in between, being published in 1670 by James Allestree—at the Rose and Crown, in St. Paul's Churchyard—who, in conjunction with John Martin, had published the second part of "Hudibras" seven years previously. Later in the same year, or early in 1671, appeared the volume which, as already mentioned, contained both "Paradise Regained" and "Samson Agonistes," published like the Latin Grammar by John Starkey. Simmons, meantime, had done nothing further with "Paradise Lost," and it was not until some unknown date in 1674, the year of Milton's death, that he brought it out in its second edition, though the first had been exhausted in 1669. Even in 1674 he may have thought it worth while to reprint the work only because Dryden's dramatic version of the poem was in active preparation, having been entered by Henry Herringman in the Stationers' Register on April 17 of that year under the title, "The Fall of the Angells and Man in Innocence:

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

An Heroick Opera." \* The third edition of "Paradise Lost" followed in 1678, but the widow had to wait until the end of December 1680 for the £5 then legally due to her from Simmons, when, as we have already shown, he not only paid her this amount, but, by adding a further £3, compounded for the final sum to which she would have been entitled in the event of the third edition being sold out. Though secure now in sole possession of the copyright of "Paradise Lost" Simmons does not seem to have been at all anxious to keep it, for at the end of the same year, or early in 1681, he sold it for £25 to Brabazon Aylmer, "at the sign of the Three Pigeons in Cornhill," a man noted, says Masson, for his integrity, and good taste in his business. Aylmer had already published Milton's "Epistolæ Familiares" and "Prolusiones Oratoriæ," which he had entered in the Stationers' Register, as duly licensed by L'Estrange, on July 1, 1674—four months before the poet's death—and, in the same year, Milton's tract on the "Declaration, or Letters Patents of the Election of the present King of Poland, John the Third." How "Paradise Lost" would have fared had the copyright remained in Aylmer's sole possession it is idle now to speculate, but, as it happened, before it was reprinted, it fell into the hands of Jacob Tonson, who had just started in business, and was soon to become, in Dr. Masson's phrase, "the third man after Humphry Moseley and Henry Herringman in the true apostolic succession of London publishers."

The great Tonson deserves a whole chapter to himself, but to follow him alone through his long career would spoil the structure of our connected narrative. He must take his place therefore with the rest of his craft: a young man as we see him at first, following the example of his brother Richard, who, like Jacob, had been left

\* Dryden, now Poet Laureate, had personally sought Milton's permission for thus "traversing" the poem. "O, certainly, you may tag my verses if you please, Mr. Dryden," appear to have been his words. Though licensed in April, it was not published until the end of 1674.



## JACOB TONSON AND DRYDEN

£100 by his father. Richard had opened a bookshop in 1676 within Gray's Inn Gate, where, among other things, he had already published Otway's "Don Carlos." Jacob started business at the Judge's Head, in Chancery Lane, close to Fleet Street, in 1678, where he too became one of Otway's booksellers, as well as one of Nahum Tate's. Jacob, more ambitious than his brother, began to cast his net for the Poet Laureate himself. Dryden, as we have seen, was one of Herringman's authors, but Tonson had not been in business two years before he succeeded in tempting him with £20 for his play, "Troilus and Cressida ; or, Truth found too late," which he published in 1679, sharing the venture with another bookseller of the name of Abel Swalle. A few years later came the half-share in "Paradise Lost," which he bought from Brabazon Aylmer on August 17, 1683, paying more for it than Aylmer had given to Simmons for the whole copyright some three years previously. It was not, however, until 1688 that Tonson first turned this investment to profitable account by issuing his handsome folio edition of the work, with Dryden's well-known lines engraved beneath the portrait of Milton. This fourth edition was published by subscription, and proved so successful that the publisher did not hesitate, in 1690-1, to buy "at an advanced price" the second half of the copyright, subsequently acquiring the rest of Milton's poetry—or at least the leading share in it—from other publishers. According to Spence, Jacob admitted on one occasion that "Paradise Lost" brought him in more money than any other poem that he published.

Meantime Dryden and Tonson had been associated in other great works, and not always, unhappily, in the friendliest spirit. "He was the bookseller to the famous Dryden," says John Dunton in 1705, "and is himself a very good judge of persons and authors ; and as there is nobody more competently qualified to give their opinion upon one another, so there is none who does it with a more severe exactness, or with less partiality ; for, to do

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

Mr. Tonson justice, he speaks his mind upon all occasions, and will flatter nobody." Dunton nearly always speaks of his brother booksellers "with a pat of butter on his tongue," as they say in Ireland, and we need not take this estimate of Tonsonian candour too literally. His letters to Dryden at the time of their disputes are more often in the nature of soft answers endeavouring to turn away wrath, and more than one anecdote shows that he was no stranger to the subtle art of flattery. The truth is that great changes were taking place in the book world, and no one was quicker than Tonson to recognise, among other facts, that professional writers with a popular following were becoming a power to be reckoned with. The struggle for the mastery between printer and publisher having ended in the publisher's sweeping victory, the sterner contest had now begun between publisher and author. The new development had largely been brought about by that omnipotent person the general reader, who, slowly but surely, had been altering the literary outlook. Books which hitherto had been regarded as appealing only to the leisured and cultured classes had a wider and ever-increasing audience, and authors, as well as publishers, looked for a proportionate addition to their profits. How rapidly things were changing in this respect may be seen in the difference between Milton's original £5 for "Paradise Lost," and the £1,200 which Dryden, in the next generation, is said by Pope to have received, all told, for his "Virgil," or the two hundred and fifty guineas which Tonson paid the same poet for the first edition of his "Fables," with an engagement to bring that sum up to £300 on sending the book to a second edition.\*

\* The memorials of this transaction, given by Dr. Johnson in his life of the poet, are to the following effect :

"I do hereby promise to pay John Dryden, Esq., or order, on the 25th of March, 1699, the sum of two hundred and fifty guineas, in consideration of ten thousand verses, which the said John Dryden, Esq., is to deliver to me Jacob Tonson, when finished, whereof seven thousand five hundred verses, more or less, are already in the said Jacob Tonson's possession. And I do hereby farther promise and engage myself, to make up the said sum of

## A LAUREATE'S SHARP LETTER

Dryden realised as soon as any one the altered state of the literary market, and none was quicker to take advantage of it. The Laureate needed no Society of Authors to look after his interests. He had some of the contempt for the booksellers which characterised the old Court poets, but none of their delicate scruples about accepting money from the trade. "Some kind of intercourse must be carried on betwixt us," he wrote tartly during one of his little differences with Tonson, "while I am translating Virgil. Therefore I give you notice that I have done the seventh Æneid in the country; and intend, some few days hence, to go upon the eighth; when that is finished, I expect fifty pounds in good silver; not such as I have had formerly. I am not obliged to take gold, neither two hundred and fifty guineas three hundred pounds sterling to the said John Dryden, Esq., his executors, administrators, or assigns, at the beginning of the second impression of the said ten thousand verses.

"In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal, this 20th day of March, 169<sup>8</sup>/<sub>9</sub>."

"JACOB TONSON

"Sealed and delivered, being first duly stamp't, pursuant to the acts of parliament for that purpose, in the presence of

"BEN. PORTLOCK,  
"WILL CONGREVE."

"March 24, 1698.

"Received then of Mr. Jacob Tonson the sum of two hundred sixty-eight pounds fifteen shillings, in pursuance of an agreement for ten thousand verses, to be delivered by me to the said Jacob Tonson, whereof I have already delivered to him about seven thousand five hundred, more or less; he the said Jacob Tonson being obliged to make up the foresaid sum of two hundred and sixty-eight pounds fifteen shillings three hundred pounds, at the beginning of the second impression of the foresaid ten thousand verses;

I say, received by me,

"JOHN DRYDEN.

"Witness, CHARLES DRYDEN."

Dryden's death in May 1700, only six months after the first publication of the "Fables," robbed him of the supplementary sum. The second edition was not published until 1713.

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

will I ; nor stay for it beyond four-and-twenty hours after it is due. . . . I told Mr. Congreve that I knew you too well to believe you meant me any kindness."

Debased coinage was the cause of much of the trouble between Tonson and his angry poet, who either could not or would not realise that Tonson, like everybody else, was suffering from the same cause. "These complaints and demands," as Macaulay justly says, "which have been preserved from destruction only by the eminence of the writer, are doubtless merely a fair example of the correspondence which filled all the mail-bags of England for several months." In justice to Dryden it is only fair to add that when he wrote in this strain to his publisher he had been deprived by the Revolution of his post as laureate and historiographer, and was now mainly dependent for his income upon what he could earn by his works. "The inevitable consequence of poverty," says Dr. Johnson in his life of Dryden, "is dependence. Dryden had probably no recourse in his exigences but to his bookseller. The particular character of Tonson I do not know ; but the general conduct of traders was much less liberal in those times than in our own ; their views were narrower, and their manners grosser. To the mercantile ruggedness of that race, the delicacy of the poet was sometimes exposed. Lord Bolingbroke, who in his youth had cultivated poetry, related to Dr. King of Oxford, that one day, when he visited Dryden, they heard, as they were conversing, another person entering the house. 'This,' said Dryden, 'is Tonson. You will take care not to depart before he goes away ; for I have not completed the sheet which I promised him ; and, if you leave me unprotected, I must suffer all the rudeness to which his resentment can prompt his tongue.'"

There is no trace of this alleged rudeness in any of the surviving correspondence between Dryden and his publisher ; the boot is rather on the other foot. The letters begin hopefully enough in 1684 with the poet's acknowledgment of two melons which had been sent as a

## A PROTEST FROM TONSON

present from the publisher, and end with the final reconciliation in 1697, when he thanks him "heartily for the sherry," and, in another note, hopes that his "Ode for St. Cecilia's Day" has done him service, "and will do more." When Jacob sent him the friendly melons in 1684 Dryden was engaged in their first big undertaking together, the "Miscellany Poems," in which he says of the second volume then in preparation that he is resolved that they shall have "nothing but new" and "nothing but good." Dryden's, or, as it is otherwise called, Tonson's, "Miscellany" ran into five volumes during the poet's lifetime, and was continued after his death. The first difference between poet and publisher is seen in connexion with the third volume of the "Miscellanies," when Tonson complains in the following characteristic and by no means discreditable letter, written in early 1693 :

SIR,

I have here returned the Ovid, which I read with a great deal of pleasure, and think nothing can be more entertaining; but by this letter you find I am not so well satisfied as perhaps you might think. I hope at the same time the matter of fact I lay down in this letter will appear grounds for it, and which I beg you would consider of; and then I believe I shall at least be excused.

You may please, Sir, to remember, that upon my first proposal about the 3rd Miscellany, I offered fifty pounds, and talked of several authors, without naming Ovid. You asked if it should not be guineas, and said I should not repent it; upon which I immediately complied, and left it wholly to you what, and for the quantity too: and I declare it was the farthest in the world from my thoughts that by leaving it to you I should have the less. Thus the case stood when you went into Essex. After I came out of Northamptonshire I wrote to you, and received a letter dated Monday, Oct. 3rd, 1692, from which letter I now write word for word what follows:

"I am translating about six hundred lines, or somewhat less, of the first book of the Metamorphoses. If I cannot get my price, which shall be twenty guineas, I will translate the whole book; which, coming out before the whole translation, will spoil Tate's



## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

undertakings. It is one of the best I have ever made, and very pleasant. This, with Hero and Leander, and the piece of Homer (or, if it be not enough, I will add more), will make a good part of a Miscellany."

Those, Sir, are the very words, and the only ones in that letter relating to that affair; and the Monday following you came to town.—After your arrival you shewed Mr. Motteaux what you had done (which he told me was to the end of the story of Daphnis) [Daphne], and demanded, as you mentioned in your letter, twenty guineas, which that bookseller refused. Now, Sir, I the rather believe that was just so much done, by reason the number of lines you mention in your letter agrees with the quantity of lines that so much of the first book makes; which upon counting the Ovid, I find to be in the Latin 566, in the English 759; and the bookseller told me there was no more demanded of him for it.—Now, Sir, what I entreat you would please to consider of is this: that it is reasonable for me to expect at least as much favour from you as a strange bookseller; and I will never believe yet it can be in your nature to use one the worse for leaving it to you; and if the matter of fact as I state it be true (and upon my word what I mention I can shew you in your letter), then pray, Sir, consider how much dearer I pay than you offered it to the other bookseller; for he might have had to the end of the story of Daphnis for 20 guineas, which is in your translation 759 lines;

And then suppose 20 guineas more for the	
same number . . . . .	759 lines,

that makes for 40 guineas . . . . .	1518 lines;
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and all that I have for fifty guineas are but 1446; so that, if I have no more, I pay 10 guineas above 40, and have 72 lines less for fifty, in proportion, than the other bookseller should have had for 40, at the rate you offered him the first part. This is, Sir, what I shall take as a great favour if you please to think of. I had intentions of letting you know this before; but till I had paid the money, I would not ask to see the book, nor count the lines, lest it should look like a design of not keeping my word. When you have looked over the rest of what you have already translated, I desire you would send it; and I own yet if you don't think fit to add something more, I must submit: it is wholly at your choice, for I left it entirely to you; but I believe you cannot imagine I expected so little; for you were pleased to use me much kindlier in Juvenal, which is not reckoned so easy to translate as Ovid.

## DRYDEN'S OPINION OF PUBLISHERS

Sir, I humbly beg your pardon for this long letter, and upon my word I had rather have your good will than any man's alive ; and, whatever you are pleased to do, will always acknowledge myself, Sir,

Your most obliged humble Servant,

J. TONSON.

Dryden evidently bore the publisher no ill-will on this account, for later in the same year he writes: "I am much ashamed of myself that I am so much behind with you in kindness. Above all things I am sensible of your good nature, in bearing me to this place [Northamptonshire] wherein, besides the cost, you must needs neglect your own business ; but I will endeavour to make you some amends ; and therefore I desire you to command me something for your service." The translation of "Virgil," which Tonson issued in July 1697, was published by subscription and led to financial squabbles apart from the question of payment in clipped or depreciated coinage. There was something to be said for Dryden when he complained because the publisher declined to allow anything for the notes. "The notes and prefaces shall be short," retorts the poet in what Scott describes as a bitter gibe at Jacob's parsimony, "because you shall get the more by saving money." But he decides to make the best of what he regards as inevitably a bad job. "Upon trial," he tells him a few months later, "I find all of your trade are sharpeners, and you not more than others ; therefore I have not wholly left you." In his life of Dryden, Sir Walter Scott has some pertinent remarks to make not only on the subject of these disputes with Tonson, but also on the whole, eternal question of the pecuniary rewards of authorship :

Whatever occasional subjects of dissension arose between Dryden and his bookseller, mutual interest, the strongest of ties, appears always to have brought them together, after the first ebullition of displeasure had subsided. There might, on such occasions, be room for acknowledging faults on both sides ; for, if we admit that the bookseller was penurious and churlish, we cannot deny that Dryden seems often to have been abundantly captious and

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

irascible. Indeed, as the poet placed, and justly, more than a mercantile value upon what he sold, the trader, on his part, was necessarily cautious not to afford a price which his returns could not pay ; so that while, in one point of view, the author sold at an inadequate price, the purchaser, in another, really got no more than value for his money. That literature is ill recompensed, is generally rather the fault of the public than the bookseller, whose trade can only exist by buying that which can be sold to advantage. The bookseller, who purchased the "Paradise Lost" for ten pounds, had probably no very good bargain.

In point of fact, as we have already mentioned, Dr. Masson estimates that Simmons made five or six times what he paid Milton for "Paradise Lost." This, as Professor Saintsbury remarks in his edition of Scott's "Dryden," from which the foregoing letters are extracted, "cannot be considered a bad trade return ; but the sale price of 'Paradise Lost' seems to provoke unfounded commonplaces from even the most unexpected sources."

Jacob Tonson, like most of us, had his failings, but he did yeoman service in helping to develop a popular literary taste, and his liberality to his leading authors, notwithstanding Dryden's grievances, fairly entitle him to be regarded as our first Prince of Publishers. Apart from his own authors, he not only introduced Milton to a far larger public than he had ever known before, but, with Rowe's octavo edition in seven volumes (1709), was practically the first to open Shakespeare to the general reader, the four folio editions, apart from their expense, having already become scarce. Jacob had moved to the sign of the Shakespeare's Head in Gray's Inn Gate—probably his late brother's shop—when he published Rowe's edition, but before following him there, and entering upon the Golden Age of Bookselling, as some one has called the eighteenth century, it is necessary to gather up a few of the remaining threads of seventeenth-century history.

John Bunyan and his publishers take us back to the early days of Roger L'Estrange's surveyorship. More

## THE TRIALS OF "ELEPHANT SMITH"

than one of Bunyan's booksellers, as well as the author himself, was unpleasantly familiar with the prison-house. Francis Smith, who published his earlier works at the sign of the Elephant and Castle, near Temple Bar, fell into official disfavour from the very beginning of the Restoration. He was known as "Anabaptist, *alias* Elephant Smith," and became quite accustomed to having his house searched, and his windows smashed. Dr. John Brown, in his exhaustive life of Bunyan, tells us that in 1660—the very year of Charles the Second's proclamation—"Elephant Smith" was three times a prisoner for publishing a little book entitled "The Lord's Loud Call to England," and similar productions, being kept, apparently, in the hands of the King's Messengers at a noble a day, the total cost amounting to £50. In August of the following year, writes Dr. Brown, Smith and piles of books "were seized by warrant, he being carried to the Gate-house Prison, for 'having a hand in printing and compiling dangerous Books,' which surely were not so very dangerous, seeing that those who carried them off straightway sold the sheets to the trade again, and put the money into their own pockets. It was during the imprisonment that he says, 'I was locked up in a room where I had neither chair nor stool to rest upon, and yet ten shillings per week must be the price, and before I had been there three nights £7 15s. was demanded for present fees. That is to say, £5 to excuse me for wearing irons, ten shillings for my entrance-week lodging, five shillings for sheets, five shillings for garnish money, and the rest for Turnkey's fees.' " He describes elsewhere how he fell into the toils of L'Estrange and his men, evidently being a marked man. Dr. Brown suggests that it was because this shop was no longer safe that Bunyan changed his publisher, for until "Grace Abounding" was issued by George Larkin in 1666 all his prison books were published by "Elephant Smith." The "Pilgrim's Progress" came from yet another publisher—Nathaniel Ponder, whose shop was then in the Poultry, at the sign



## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

of the Peacock. Ponder published for John Owen, the great Nonconformist theologian, who had helped to secure Bunyan's final release from prison, and it was probably on this account that the "Pilgrim" obtained its introduction to its publisher. After the success of this famous book he was known among his brother craftsmen as "Bunyan Ponder." He was an agreeable man to have dealings with. "He has," says Dunton, "sweetness and enterprise in his air which plead and anticipate in his favour." Notwithstanding his pleasant manner, however, "Bunyan Ponder," like "Elephant Smith," had in the previous year found his way to the Gate-house Prison, as may be seen from the Privy Council Minutes, where there is the following record: "1676. At the Court at Whitehall, May 10th (the King present) a warrant was issued to commit Nathaniell Ponder to the Gate-house, for carrying to the presse to be printed an unlicensed Pamphlet tending to Sedition and Defamation of the Christian Religion." But Ponder had little of the stuff in his composition of which martyrs are made, for we find another entry on the 26th of the same month to the effect that: "Nathaniel Ponder, Stationer, was discharged upon his humble petition, setting forth his hearty sorrow for his offence, and promising never to offend in like manner." He also had to pay his prison fees and enter into a bond of £500 as surety for his good behaviour. Ponder entered "Pilgrim's Progress" in the Stationers' Register as his copy on December 22, 1677, and published it early in the following year, "price bound 1s. 6d." The book met with a success which surprised no one more than Bunyan himself, three editions being called for within the first twelve months. Bunyan took the opportunity with each of these reprints to make several notable additions, and was encouraged by their continued popularity to venture upon the second part, which came from the same publisher early in 1685, bearing on the reverse of the title-page the significant warning: "I appoint Mr. Nathaniel Ponder, but no other, to Print



## SALE OF "THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS"

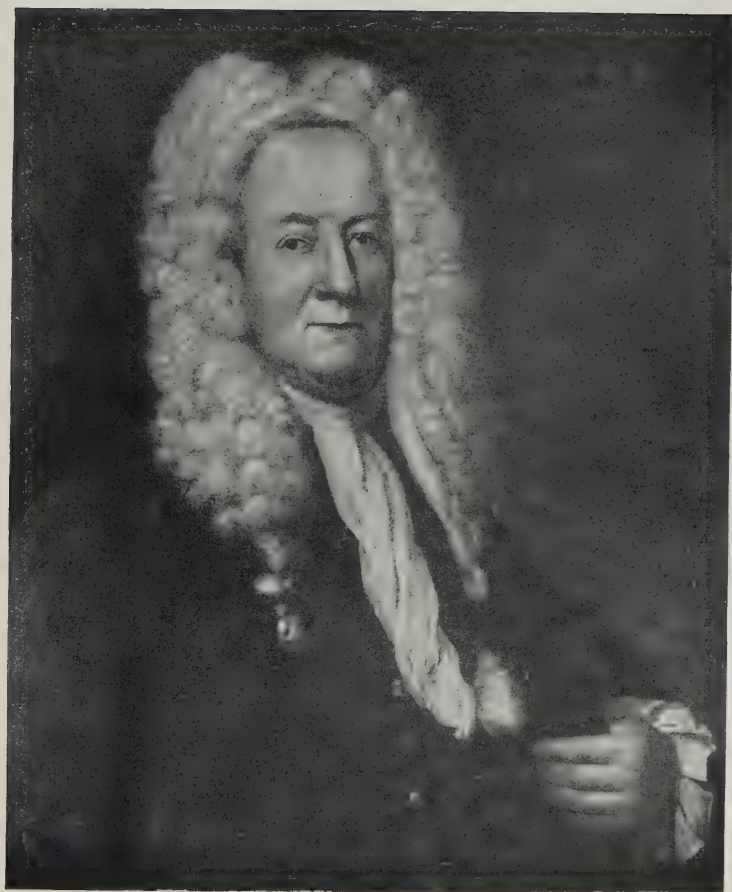
this Book. John Bunyan." It was necessary to print this, for spurious books were already in circulation purporting to be "The Second Part of the Pilgrim's Progress," one by a writer who signed himself T. S., and closely resembling the original book in shape and type, coming from a John Malthus, whose shop, at the sign of the Sun, was actually in the same thoroughfare as Ponder's—the Poultry. Eleven editions of the "Pilgrim's Progress" were published altogether during the author's lifetime, all by Nathaniel Ponder, though after Bunyan's death in 1688 his name disappears from the imprint until the fifteenth edition of 1695, when he makes his final appearance as the "Pilgrim's" publisher. His address shows that by that time he had moved from the Poultry to "London-House Yard, near the west end of St. Paul's." Nathaniel Ponder also published Bunyan's "Treatise of the Fear of God" (1679), and "The Life and Death of Mr. Badman" (1680).

Before Bunyan first walked into his shop with the manuscript of the "Pilgrim's Progress" Ponder had numbered Andrew Marvell among his authors. That was in the earlier seventies, when he displayed his sign of the Peacock in Chancery Lane, near Fleet Street. Whether he published any of Marvell's political poems cannot now be said, for most of these, appearing probably as broadsides or pamphlets immediately they were written, have long since disappeared in their original form. The first edition of his other poetry did not appear until after his death. He wrote some of his bitter satires for private circulation, and his most important tractate, the "Account of the Growth of Popery and Arbitrary Government," was, ostensibly at least, printed at Amsterdam, and published anonymously. In his vigorous controversy with Samuel Parker, the champion of intolerance and afterwards Bishop of Oxford, Marvell issued in 1672, without his name, "The Rehearsal Transposed, or Animadversions upon a late Book," which sent the Nonconformist world, as Dr. Masson

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

says, into thankful ecstasies. Marvell acknowledged the authorship in the second part of the same work, which followed in 1763 in reply to Parker's retaliation. L'Estrange himself was compelled to license the second part, much against his will. Charles II. with characteristic good-humour suffered it to pass for the sake of its wit, and though L'Estrange, in his *rôle* as licenser of the press, made a number of alterations in the manuscript, he declared subsequently that his corrections were incorrectly printed. Both parts of "The Rehearsal Transposed" were published by Nathaniel Ponder at the Peacock.

A more distinguished worthy to whose memory justice has never yet been done in our scanty bookselling annals is Thomas Guy, better known as the founder of the great hospital which still bears his name. Charles Knight, who has given currency to most of the legends surrounding this shadowy figure, embroiders his facts with so much idle, if amiable, imagining, and makes assumptions so wide of the mark, that it is by no means easy to disentangle fact from fiction. It was not until Dr. Samuel Wilks and Mr. G. T. Bettany published their "Biographical History of Guy's Hospital" in 1892 that anything approaching an adequate account of Guy's bookselling career, as well as of his public life and benefactions, found its way into print. From all accounts it is clear that Guy, like various other publishers who have since left fortunes which are frequently, but unfairly, compared with the miserable rewards of authorship, made the bulk of his wealth by financial speculations quite outside the bounds of his bookselling business. He was fortunately situated for combining stocks and shares with bookselling. The little shop which he opened for the first time in 1667, with a stock worth, it is said, some £200, stood at the angle formed by Cornhill and Lombard Street, in view of the new Exchange which was springing up from the ruins of Sir Thomas Gresham's original building, swept away, like everything else in the neighbourhood,



THOMAS GUY  
*After the painting by Vanderbank*



## RISKS OF THE BIBLE TRADE

by the Great Fire of the preceding year. Guy evidently caught the speculative spirit from his surroundings. His early Bible trade was itself not a little risky. The printing of Bibles was still largely in the hands of the London monopolists, who, secure in their privileges, produced copies of the Scriptures which were a disgrace both to their craft and their religion. Cambridge occasionally exercised its right to print Bibles, but Oxford had bartered away its similar privilege to the Stationers' Company in 1637 for an annual payment of £200. The London printers in Guy's early days therefore had matters much their own way, with the result that Bibles were not only expensive to buy, but so shamefully printed that one edition is said to have contained no fewer than six thousand errors.

Perhaps it was in the pious hope of remedying this evil, as Charles Knight would have us believe, that Guy joined with others in encouraging the printing of the English Bible in Holland, importing whole editions for circulation in this country, and doubtless making a handsome profit thereby. This trade, as William Maitland records, in the account of Guy and his hospital which he included in his history of London in 1739, "proving not only very detrimental to the public revenue, but likewise to the King's printer, all ways and means were devised to quash the same ; which, being vigorously put in execution, the booksellers, by frequent seizures and prosecutions, became so great sufferers that they judged a further pursuit thereof inconsistent with their own interest." Thomas Guy and Peter Parker—one of the booksellers who had shared in the sale of the first edition of "Paradise Lost"—were presently able to turn this defeat into a greater victory by becoming associated with Oxford University, which, under the generous influence of Dr. Fell, had begun to awake—in the words of Mr. Falconer Madan in his "Brief Account" of the Oxford University Press (1908)—"not merely to the fact of its privileges, but also to the duties belonging



## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

to them." In 1673 the agreement with the Stationers' Company lapsed, and Oxford began again to print Bibles and Prayer Books, to the considerable annoyance of the London monopolists, who at once did their best to stifle the competition by imitating and underselling all these new editions. "So persistently was this done," says Mr. Madan, "that it was found advisable to bring in some London booksellers into the Oxford business. Moses Pitt and William Leake were first chosen, but they were soon followed by Guy and Parker, and Oxford Bibles between 1679 and 1691 bear the imprint of these four Stationers, sometimes alone, sometimes two or three together." According to Wilks and Bettany, it was because of Pitt's—and probably Leake's—financial embarrassment that Guy and Parker were introduced to the business, the new men taking off Dr. Fell's hands the stock which had been accumulated, to the value of £5,000, and investing a further £3,000 in materials for Bible-printing. Now began a battle royal between the London Stationers and Oxford, in which first honours fell to the University, which sturdily maintained its right to its privileges before the Council, Parker and Guy bearing a large share of the legal expense, amounting in all to many hundreds of pounds. The two printers thereupon made an agreement with the Delegates of the Oxford press by which, upon payment of £240, being the arrears of the annual sum hitherto received from the Stationers' Company, they should be appointed University Printers with the sole right of printing there. This was carried into effect in March 1684, and the agreement lasted until 1691, when the Stationers' Company, enraged at what they doubtless considered the usurpation of Parker and Guy, determined to get them removed, alleging, among other things, that they had made a profit of £10,000, or even £15,000, by their connexion with Oxford, and had thus advanced "from a low and mean condition to considerable fortune." The whole story of this unworthy campaign, too long for our pages, is told by Wilks and Bettany, but

## HOW GUY MADE HIS FORTUNE

it seems that the Stationers' Company at last succeeded in prejudicing the University authorities against Guy and Parker to such an extent as to get them removed—January 1692. "Parker and Guy brought an action against the University, claiming £1,500 damages for their expulsion and the resulting loss ; but when they saw that the restoration of their contract was hopeless, they appear to have compromised the matter of damages in order to make the best bargain possible in closing the business."

During all these years Guy, though doubtless paying occasional visits to Oxford, had been steadily developing his business at his corner shop in the heart of London, apart from the considerable sales of his Oxford Bibles. For a time at least he appears to have taken his younger brother into partnership. He published a large number of school books and books of Divinity, while among his other ventures were the fourth edition of Howell's "Familiar Letters" and the third edition (with Parker) of Ogilvy's translation of Virgil. He was steadily building up his capital, too, in other ways. The story is told by Maitland to the effect that he acquired some of his fortune by the purchase of seamen's tickets at an inordinate profit. "England being engaged in an expensive war against France, the poor seamen on board the Royal Navy, for many years instead of money received tickets for their pay, which these necessitous but very useful men were obliged to dispose of at thirty, forty, and sometimes fifty in the hundred discount. Mr. Guy discovering the sweets of this traffic, became an early dealer therein." There is probably more in this story than Charles Knight is willing to admit in his "Shadows of the Old Booksellers," though his profits both from the Bible trade, and in his investments in government securities before the foundation of the South Sea Company, would alone account for his consistent and increasing prosperity. He invested largely in South Sea stock, long before the inflating of the Bubble, and was one of the shrewd shareholders who sold out in time at an immense profit, with the result

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

that within three months he is said to have made from that source alone upwards of a quarter of a million sterling. Maybe, Thomas Guy had some qualms of conscience when he thought of the wretched investors who lost their all when the crash came ; but, however that may be, it was largely out of his own huge profits in this connexion that Guy's Hospital was built and endowed, so that some good at least rose, Phœnix-like, from the ruins of what has been described as " the most enormous fabric of delusion that was ever raised among an industrious, thrifty, and prudent people."

Success did not tempt Thomas Guy into extravagance. He was as close-fisted in his home as open-handed outside. He would not even indulge in the luxury of a wife—which was, perhaps, just as well, if there be any truth in the story that he broke off his one matrimonial engagement because his prospective bride had dared to give an order without his permission. He spent all his money, however, with rare unselfishness. He seems to have been a sort of fairy godfather to whole crowds of poor relations. Long before he built Guy's Hospital he made large benefactions to the Stationers' Company for the less fortunate members of his craft ; built three new wards and made other additions to St. Thomas's Hospital, besides being one of its principal governors and a regular subscriber of £100 a year ; and not only supplied almshouses to Tamworth, where he was educated, but furnished the place with its new town hall. Our only contemporary account of the man comes from John Dunton, who writes of him in 1705 to the following effect : " Thomas Guy, in Lombard Street. He makes an eminent figure in the Company of Stationers, having been chosen Sheriff of London, and paid the fine, and is now a member of Parliament for Tamworth. He entertains a very sincere respect for English liberty. He is a man of strong reason, and can talk much to the purpose upon any subject you will propose. He is truly charitable, of which his Almshouses for the poor are standing testimonies." The fine

## NEW LAWS AND CUSTOMS

mentioned by Dunton was to the amount of £420—the price apparently paid by any one who, having been duly elected Sheriff of London, wished to evade that office. Tamworth at first showed its gratitude to Guy by returning him to Parliament in the Whig interest in 1695, and he continued to represent the same town until 1707, when that fickle constituency rejected him. He was mortally offended, and though begged to stand again by the repentant burgesses—who now remembered his oft-repeated promise, that if they supported him faithfully he would leave the whole of his fortune to the town—he declined peremptorily ever to run the risk of a second refusal. He was seventy-five when he made his South Sea fortune in the historic year of 1720, and he enjoyed the satisfaction of seeing his hospital, which cost him nearly £19,000 to build, roofed in before he died in 1724. At his death he endowed the institution with the residue of his estate, which was worth more than £200,000, after leaving at least half as much again in other bequests and charities.

Meanwhile new laws and customs had been coming into force affecting not only authors and publishers, but the whole book trade. The stringent Licensing Act of 1662, which had been allowed to lapse at the time of the Great Fire, never recovered its original strength, and was not, indeed, renewed by Charles II., though L'Estrange did his best as Surveyor of the Press to make things as lively as possible both for printers and booksellers. He found a monarch more in sympathy with him when James II. came to the throne in February 1685, the Act of 1662 being renewed for the first time for twenty years in the new King's opening Parliament. On April 30 L'Estrange himself received his knighthood, and, three weeks later, his warrant to enforce the regulations with all necessary severity. Dunton, who reveals a good deal of the human interest of the book trade in those far-off days, tells us that there was a soft side even to L'Estrange's hard heart. The Surveyor, he says, was always susceptible to the influence of the better-looking sex, and



## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

"would wink at unlicensed books if the printer's wife would but smile on him." And Dunton, whose fondness for flirting was only equalled by his boundless egotism, knew what he was writing about. The time came when King James was "frighted" away, and Nemesis, in the shape of William of Orange, not only deprived L'Estrange of his license, but sent him to prison for his avowed hostility. In the end the man who had made so many booksellers' lives a burden to them was forced to eke out his existence mainly on the wretched payments which they made him for his hack work as a translator. Though the Licensing Act, which had been renewed in 1685 for a period of seven years, was renewed in 1692 for one more year, it does not appear to have been in the least effective, and lapsed altogether at the end of the twelve months' renewal, leaving literary property without any statutory protection until the passing of the Copyright Act of Queen Anne in 1709. The disappearance of the Licensing Laws, and the end of the active history of the Stationers' Company—their police powers having become obsolete, and their political uses long since superseded—thus brought the book trade at the end of the seventeenth century to another new era in its history.

Bookselling by auction had also found its way into England by this time, with far-reaching results. William Cooper was the first bookseller to try the "Auctionary Way" in this country, though the method seems to have been practised on the Continent, by the Elzevirs and others, between seventy and eighty years before. The earliest book auction of which we have any record took place in Holland on July 6, 1599, when the library of the scholar and patriot, Philip van Marnix, Lord of St. Aldegondi, was dispersed in this way. "Reader," says William Cooper in the preface to the catalogue of the first English sale—which began on October 31, 1676, at his bookshop at the sign of the "Pelican" in Little Britain—"It hath not been usual here in England to make sales of Books by way of Auction, or who will give most for them; But it



## THE "AUCTIONARY WAY,"

having been practised in other countreys to the Advantage both of Buyers and Sellers ; It was therefore conceived (for the encouragement of Learning) to publish the Sale of these Books this manner of way ; and it is hoped that it will not be unacceptable to Schollers." The catalogue deals with between five and six thousand lots—forming the library of Dr. Lazarus Seaman, one of the Assembly of Divines—and Cooper realised about £3,000 for them. The second sale, which was also held by Cooper in Little Britain, was that of the library of the Rector of Hitchin ; and these first attempts, according to the catalogue of the third sale—which took place at the Turk's Head Coffee House in Bread Street—gave "great content and satisfaction to the gentlemen who were the buyers, and no discouragement to the sellers."

Other booksellers followed suit, and the sales soon became common in London ; but it was apparently ten years before the method found its way to the provinces—introduced by Edward Millington—and twelve years before it reached Scotland. John Dunton, the crack-brained bookseller, "who," in the elder Disraeli's words, "boasted that he had a thousand projects, fancied he had methodised six hundred, and was ruined by the fifty he executed," took a shipload of books in 1698 to sell by auction in Dublin. He quarrelled with the Irish booksellers, but returned to London boasting that he had done greater service to literature by his auctions "than any single man who had come into Ireland these hundred years." His financial troubles increasing, Dunton took to scribbling, although he declares that he "could not stoop so low as to turn author"—which he nevertheless thinks was what he was born to. His "Life and Errors of John Dunton, late Citizen of London, written in Solitude," in which, "out of mere gratitude," he says something pleasant about "the characters of the most eminent of the profession," has been described as the "maddest of all mad books," but, as may have already been noticed in our pages, it is an extremely useful volume in the history of

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

bookselling. He tells us that when he started bookselling on his own account (about 1681) the first book he published was a work by Thomas Doolittle, the nonconformist tutor whose academy was ruined by constant removal. "The book fully answered my end," says Dunton, "for, exchanging it through the whole trade, it furnished my shop with all sorts of books saleable at that time; showing that the custom already alluded to in the earlier history of the Stationers was still in vogue. "Hackney authors," says Dunton, "began to ply me with specimens as earnestly, and with as much passion and concern, as the watermen do passengers with oars and scullers." Later he complains bitterly of hackney authors, "that keep their grinders moving by the travail of their pens. These gormandisers will eat you the very life out of a copy so soon as ever it appears; for, as the times go, *original* and *abridgment* are almost reckoned as necessary as man and wife; so that I am really afraid a bookseller and a good conscience will shortly grow some strange thing in the land." The mischief to which Dunton refers, remarks Mr. Birrell, in his all too brief paper on "Old Booksellers" in his volume of "Collected Essays," "was permitted by the stupidity of the judges, who refused to consider an abridgment of a book any interference with its copyright. Some learned judges have, indeed, held that an abridger is a benefactor, but as his benefactions are not his own, but another's, a shorter name might be found for him. The law on the subject is still uncertain."

Fortunately for Dunton he married, in 1682, a daughter of Samuel Annesley, another of whose daughters became the mother of John Wesley. Dunton's wife not only kept him in the paths of honesty, but "managed all my affairs for me, and left me entirely to my own rambling and scribbling humours." He took full advantage of this freedom three years later to adventure upon a voyage to the American Colonies with a cargo of books for which apparently there was then little demand at his shop, the Black Raven, in Gracechurch Street. "There



JOHN DUNTON

*From the frontispiece to his "Life and Errors"*



## THE BOOK TRADE IN AMERICA

came an universal damp upon trade by the defeat of Monmouth in the West ; and at this time, having £500 owing to me in New England, I began to think it worth my while to make a voyage of it thither." The trade had not as yet made much progress in that part of the world. The first book printed in New England came from the press established at Harvard College in 1639, with Stephen Day as printer, but his successor, Samuel Green, remained the only printer in the colony until 1660, when Marmaduke Johnson was sent over to join him with a fresh plant for the printing of Bibles for the Indians. Printing was started at Boston in 1675 by John Foster, a Harvard graduate, who was succeeded on his death in 1681 by Samuel Green, junior ; and Green was at work there when John Dunton arrived after a four months' voyage from home, during which half of his cargo of books, to the value of £500, had been cast away in the Downs. He consoled himself in New England mainly in aimless flirtations with maids and widows, for his dealings appear to have been anything but satisfactory with the four booksellers of Boston, to whom he was " as welcome as sour ale in summer." He that trades with the inhabitants of Boston," writes John, in much bitterness of spirit, " may get plenty of promises, but their payments come late." At the end of a year's wanderings, during which he opened warehouses in Salem and other places, visited Harvard, and learned something of Indian life and habits, he returned to his " lovely Iris," only to find it necessary first to hide from his creditors at home and then to seek shelter from their insistent demands by a wandering tour on the Continent. He made a fresh start upon the accession of William and Mary, having been able to settle with his creditors, and for a time fortune smiled on him. Among other things he issued the " Athenian Gazette," which Charles Knight describes as the precursor " of a revolution in the entire system of our lighter literature, which turned pamphlets and broadsides into magazines and miscellanies." Then came renewed financial straits,



## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

and, to add to his troubles, his Iris died. Her successor proved but a bitter disillusionment. It was about this time that he turned from publishing to book-auctioneering and, as already stated, set sail for Ireland with his shipload of books. Disappointment dogged poor Dunton's footsteps for the rest of his life. He made a pitiful appeal to George I. in 1723, entitled "Dying Groans from the Fleet Prison, or last Shift for Life," claiming to have played a distinguished part in bringing about "the general deliverance" accomplished by the Hanoverian succession; but, meeting with no reward, he lived on in misery for another ten years.

Dunton has something to say in his "Life and Errors" of that other book-auctioneer, Edward Millington, who, like himself, was an ordinary bookseller to begin with. It was this Millington who is said to have sheltered Milton during his temporary absence from home in or about the year 1670, when, after his third marriage, he parted with his three daughters. "About 1670," says Jonathan Richardson, the authority for this story, who gives it in the life of Milton which he prefixed to "Notes on 'Paradise Lost'" in 1734, "I have been told by one who then knew him that he lodged some time at the house of Millington, the famous auctioneer some years ago, who then sold old books in Little Britain and who used to lead him by the hand when he went abroad." Millington, it seems, had a rare way with him with his *rôle* as auctioneer-bookseller. "He had a quick wit and a wonderful fluency of speech," writes Dunton. "There was usually as much wit in his 'One, two, three!' as can be met with in a modern play. 'Where,' said Millington, 'is your generous flame for learning? Who but a sot or a blockhead would have money in his pocket, and starve his brains?'"

There is no doubt that the new system of auctioneering greatly encouraged the love of reading throughout the country. One catalogue mentioned in Mr. Lawler's little book on the subject ("Book-Auctions in England in the Seventeenth Century") specially invites the country

## THE BIRTH OF "SOTHEBY'S"

clergy to buy at low prices for distribution among their parishioners, and a penny bid was often accepted. The book auction was soon a regular feature at the country fairs, and gradually became a distinct branch of the book-selling trade. There were book lotteries as well, and sales by inch of candle, announcements to that effect being found in the newspapers of the period. The first English auctioneer to compile good, classified catalogues was Samuel Paterson, of King Street, Covent Garden, who died in 1802—"a man," wrote Johnson, who was godfather to his son Samuel, "for whom I have long had a kindness." Samuel Paterson was a first-rate bibliographer, but he loved his books too well to make a good business man. We are told that when he came across a book that was new to him he would sit reading it for hours, and the time appointed for the sale could go by for all he cared. No wonder he frequently failed in business. Samuel Baker, in 1744, founded (in York Street, Covent Garden) the first auction room instituted in this country exclusively for the sale of books, MSS., and prints, and it was here that Baker's nephew, John Sotheby, entered the business—the first of a long and distinguished line which has been inseparably associated with the history of book-auctioneering for considerably more than a century.



ARMS OF THE STATIONERS'  
COMPANY

## CHAPTER NINE : THE EARLY EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

THE dawn of the eighteenth century found the book trade in a sorry state of indiscipline. The lapse of the old Licensing Laws in 1694 had left both authors and publishers without the uncertain protection which even those arbitrary measures afforded; while the value attaching to the entry of books in the Stationers' Register is seen in the ridiculous totals for the following years :

1701	.	.	.	.	.	.	3 books
1702	.	.	.	.	.	.	2 "
1703	.	.	.	.	.	.	4 "
1704	.	.	.	.	.	.	5 "
1705	.	.	.	.	.	.	5 "
1706	.	.	.	.	.	.	2 "
1707	.	.	.	.	.	.	3 "
1708	.	.	.	.	.	.	2 "

In 1709, however, came the much-abused Copyright Act of Queen Anne—the first copyright statute ever passed in any country. It was high time that something was done to put an end to the lawless state of things prevailing since the expiration of the old Licensing Acts. The Stationers' Company did its best to maintain its ancient usage in the matter of duly registered "copies," passing bye-laws forbidding any member to print, bind, or sell any book belonging to another member; but their printed regulations were as so much waste-paper. The freebooters of the press were never so openly defiant as now. They were the "set of wretches we authors call pirates," as Addison says in the "Tatler," "who print any book, poem, or sermon as soon as it appears in the world, in a smaller volume, and sell it, as all other thieves do stolen goods, at a cheaper rate." Even John Dunton declines to praise when he includes "felonious Lee"—perhaps merely for the sake of the pun—in the

## THE FIRST COPYRIGHT ACT

character sketches of his "Life and Errors." "Such a pirate, such a cormorant," he writes of this "Mr. Lee of Lombard Street," "was never before. Copies, books, men, ships, all were one; he held no propriety, right or wrong, good or bad, till at last he became to be known; and the booksellers, not enduring so ill a man to disgrace them, spewed him out, and off he marched for Ireland, when he acted as felonious Lee, as he did in London." Ireland remained more or less free to pirates until the Union of 1801, when the Copyright Act was extended to that country, thus putting an end to the unauthorised editions, cheaply printed in Dublin, and surreptitiously imported into Great Britain, which had been a grievous source of trouble since the early days of printing.

The London booksellers, finding their bye-laws wholly inadequate as a means of protecting themselves against one another, applied to Parliament for a new Licensing Act in 1703, again in 1706, and for a third time in 1709, when they were at length rewarded with the celebrated Statute of Queen Anne. Tradition has it that the original Bill was drafted by Swift, whose draft was cut up in Committee. However that may be, it did something which no other Act had ever done—it made some attempt to provide for the due recognition of the rights of authorship. Authors, as well as publishers—provided they had not parted with their property—were given the copyright of books already printed for a period of twenty-one years, dating from April 10, 1710, and no longer. New books were placed on a different footing, copyright in this case lasting only fourteen years, with the proviso that in the event of the authors surviving the said term they were to be granted another period of fourteen years. Among other things, piracy was to be punished by forfeiture and the fine of a penny per sheet—half to go to the Crown and half to the informer; and registration at Stationers' Hall was again demanded as a necessary condition of protection. This well-meaning but, as

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

Mr. Birrell calls it, "perfidious" measure, though it did (and for the first time) confer upon authors statutory rights in their literary property, spoilt the whole case for perpetual copyright. Hitherto the belief in this perpetuity had been general, the booksellers believing that any literary property which they purchased became theirs and their successors' for all time. Authors held the same view, and sold or retained their copyrights accordingly. Amid all the judicial differences on the subject during the eighteenth century, said Mr. Birrell in his lectures as Quain Professor of Law at University College, London,\* "there was a steady majority of judges in favour of the view that but for the Statute of Anne an author was entitled to perpetual copyright in his published work. This right (if it ever existed) the Act destroyed. Whether this judicial opinion as to the existence at Common Law of perpetual copyright in an author and his assigns was sound may well be doubted, and possibly if the House of Lords had held in *Donaldson v. Becket*† that perpetual copyright had survived Queen Anne, an Act of Parliament would, sooner or later, have been passed curtailing the rights of authors. But how annoying, how distressing, to have evolution artificially arrested and so interesting a question stifled by an ignorant Legislature, set in motion not by an irate populace clamouring for books . . . but by the authors and their proprietors, the booksellers."

It is pleasant to find that while the booksellers were in the thick of their troubles in the early years of the eighteenth century they still had time and inclination to make a practice of the trade sale dinners, a custom which survived until October 24, 1888, when, unfortunately, it died out with Bentley's last sale at the Albion Tavern. There is little doubt that the sale dinner, like piracy itself, was something of an institution among the London booksellers long before the eighteenth century,

\* "Seven Lectures on the Law and History of Copyright in Books," 1899.

† See p. 262.



## THE CHAPTER COFFEE HOUSE

but the earliest direct evidence of its existence is the catalogue\* of the stock-in-trade of Mrs. Elizabeth Harris, deceased, to be sold at "The Bear in Avey-Mary-Lane, on Monday the Eleventh of this Instant Decemb. 1704, Beginning at Nine in the Morning: Where the Company shall be entertained with a Breakfast; and at Noon with a good Dinner, and a Glass of Wine: and then proceed with the Sale in order to finish that Evening." They knew the way to a man's pocket in those days. What bookseller could refuse to be generous after a good dinner, even if he stopped at that one glass of wine! But it was a pleasant custom, and the friendly gossip over the nuts and wine must have done much to soften the asperities of trade competition. They needed softening, if ever they did, in those quarrelsome days of the early eighteenth century. Nothing is more surprising than to turn from some of the stories of petty bookselling wars and personal spite to the social amenities and co-operative enterprise which presently took definite shape in the famous Chapter Coffee House, which, in the annals of eighteenth-century publishing, fills the place occupied by the Mermaid Tavern in the history of Elizabethan literature.† Before the Chapter Coffee House days—in 1719 to be exact—a regular association was formed by a number of booksellers for trade purposes under the strange name of the "Conger"—a term which, according to Nichols, "was supposed to have been at first applied to them individually, alluding to the Conger

\* This is one of a series of sale catalogues, 1704-68, in the possession of Messrs. Longmans and Co. An account of them, by Mr. W. H. Peet, will be found in "Notes and Queries," 7 S., ix. 301.

† The Chapter Coffee House has many literary as well as bookselling associations. Goldsmith dined there, and poor Chatterton may or may not have tasted its hospitalities. "I am quite familiar at the Chapter Coffee House," he writes in one of his proud, boastful letters, "and know all the geniuses there." In its later history Charlotte and Anne Brontë stayed there during their first visit to London after the triumphant appearance of "Jane Eyre." The Chapter House was converted into a tavern in 1854.

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

Eel, which is said to swallow the smaller fry ; or it may possibly have been taken from *Congeries*.” Whatever the origin of its name, the society itself flourished for a number of years, and in 1736 a similar partnership was formed, under the title of the New Conger, by Charles Rivington and Arthur Bettesworth, two of the Paternoster Row booksellers. Both associations were succeeded by the Chapter Coffee House in Paternoster Row, where the old custom of co-operative publishing—on the lines of the combined enterprise of the Stationers’ Company under the Charter of James I.—gradually developed into the systematic division of individual books, or series of books, into shares, each shareholder being responsible for his portion of the expenses, and receiving his proportionate number of the books at cost price, or, in certain cases, his proportionate amount of the profits. Many works, such as Johnson’s “Lives of the Poets,” were brought into the world under this co-operative system. “Chapter Books” they were at first called ; a name which subsequently gave place to “Trade Books.”

The bookselling localities were more specialised in the early eighteenth century than at the present day. “The booksellers of ancient books in all languages,” writes Macky in his “Journey through England” (1724) “are in Little Britain and Paternoster Row ; those for divinity and the classics on the north side of St. Paul’s Cathedral ; law, history and plays about Temple Bar ; and the French booksellers in the Strand. It seems, then, that the bookselling business has been gradually resuming its original situation near this Cathedral ever since the beginning of George I., while the neighbourhood of Duck Lane\* and Little Britain has been proportionately falling into disuse.” In its palmy days Little Britain was a favourite resort of Swift and other great bookmen and booklovers of his time. Scholars

\* Duck Lane was one of the arteries of Little Britain, which, like those in the neighbourhood of Paternoster Row, were given up largely to the booksellers.

## SWIFT'S BOOKSELLER

went there for their Greek and Latin texts, or their favourite French and Italian authors, afterwards foregathering in the old "Mourning Bush" in Aldersgate to discuss both their spoils and the current gossip of the town. Swift mentions several visits to Christopher Bateman, one of the best known of these Little Britain booksellers, in his "Journal to Stella." On January 6, 1711, he tells her that he "went to Bateman's, the bookseller's, and laid out eight and forty shillings for books," for which he seems to have bought "three little volumes of 'Lucian' in French, for our Stella." A few months later he was at the same bookseller's, "to see a fine old library he has bought, and my finger itched as yours would do at a china shop."

Bateman was a thoroughly competent man. "There are few booksellers in England (if any)," says Dunton, "that understand books better than Mr. Bateman, nor does his diligence and industry come short of his honesty." There appears to have been a custom among some of his brethren to permit customers to have the run of their shops and read the books without taking them away, for which privilege they had to pay a small subscription. Reading chairs or stools were kept in the shops for this purpose, and if the books were not finished at a single sitting they were kept until the readers returned to finish them. Bateman, however, abandoned this custom. "I suppose," he said, "you may be a physician or an author, and want some recipe or quotation; and if you buy it I will engage it to be perfect before you leave me, but not after, as I have suffered by leaves being torn out, and the books returned to my very great loss and prejudice" (Nichols's "Literary Anecdotes"). Book lotteries, as mentioned on p. 193, were also in vogue. Swift, on April 27, 1711, tells Stella that he spent £4 7s. in thus gambling with a bookseller, winning six books in return.

Exactly how long it was that the centre of the trade had shifted from St. Paul's Churchyard to Little Britain is not quite clear, though the Churchyard never seems

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

to have recovered, in this connexion, from the losses of the Great Fire of 1666. That Little Britain itself had long passed its prime before the middle of the eighteenth century is confirmed by Roger North, who, in 1744, regrets its vanished glories in a passage which has scarcely a good word for the booksellers of his own day.\* In Dr. John North's time (he died in 1683), writes his biographer,

Little Britain was a plentiful and perpetual emporium of learned authors; and men went thither as to a market. This drew to the place a mighty trade; the rather because the shops were spacious, and the learned gladly resorted to them, where they seldom failed to meet with agreeable conversation. And the booksellers themselves were knowing and conversible men, with whom, for the sake of bookish knowledge, the greatest wits were pleased to converse. And we may judge the time as well spent there, as (in latter days) either in tavern or coffee-house; though the latter hath carried off the spare hours of most people. But now this emporium is vanished, and the trade contracted into the hands of two or three persons, who, to make good their monopoly, ransack, not only their neighbours of the trade that are scattered about town, but all over England, aye, and beyond sea too, and send abroad their circulators, and in that manner get into their hands all that is valuable. The rest of the trade are content to take their refuse, with which, and the fresh scum of the press, they furnish one side of a shop, which serves for the sign of a bookseller, rather than a real one; but, instead of selling, deal as factors and procure what the country divines and gentry send for; of whom each hath his book-factor, and, when wanting anything, writes to his bookseller, and pays his bill. And it is wretched to consider what pickpocket work, with help of the press, these demi-booksellers make. They crack their brains to find out selling subjects, and keep hirelings in garrets, at hard meat, to write and correct by the great; and so puff up an octavo to a sufficient thickness, and there is six shillings current for an hour and a half's reading, and perhaps never to be read or looked upon after. One that would go higher, must take his fortune at blank walls, and corners of streets, or repair to the sign of Bateman, Innys, and one or two more, where are best choice, and better pennyworths. I might touch other abuses, as bad paper, in-

\* Roger North's "Life of the Hon. and Rev. Dr. John North," 1744.

## TONSON AND THE KIT CAT CLUB

correct printing, and false advertising; all which and worse is to be expected, if a careful author is not at the heels of them.

This was the tribe which Pope lashed so unmercifully in the "Dunciad," but it is only fair to add that the satirists have had matters too much their own way in presenting posterity with the history of the book trade as a whole. Jacob Tonson and Bernard Lintot, the two great publishers of the early eighteenth century, whatever their faults may have been, certainly helped to give a better tone to the book world than the critics would have us believe. Against Lintot's benevolence and general moral character, says Dr. Young, "there is not an insinuation." And Jacob Tonson, as we have seen, was a very worthy fellow, in spite of his latter-day snobbery. For Tonson, after Dryden's death in 1700—where we left him in the last chapter—had entered upon a new, and, from the social point of view, more dazzling phase in his career. He became secretary, and probably had some share in the founding, of the famous Kit Cat Club, hobnobbing with Dukes and the leading men of wit and fashion among the Whigs, having his portrait painted, like every other member of the Club, by Sir Godfrey Kneller, and flattering his vanity to his heart's content in the celebrated room which he built for their meetings at his own villa at Barn Elms.\* Tonson was liked none the better by some of his friends for this illustrious association, if we are to credit the friendly criticism of Rowe, who writes, in his "Dialogue between Tonson and Congreve, in imitation of Horace," which appeared in 1714:

While in your early days of reputation,  
You for blue garters had not such a passion,  
While yet you did not live, as now your trade is,  
To drink with noble lords, and toast their ladies,  
Thou, Jacob Tonson, were, to my conceiving,  
The cheerfullest, best, honestest fellow living.

\* Kneller painted his well-known series of portraits for this room—forty-eight in all—on canvas of uniform size (30 in. × 28 in.), a size which has ever since been known as "Kit Cat."



## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

The club was not allowed to interfere with the course of Tonson's regular business, which he was doubtless shrewd enough to see would benefit by such friendly intimacy with writers of the stamp of Addison and Steele. He had published Addison's "Poems to his Majesty" in 1695. In 1705 he issued his "Remarks on several Parts of Italy"; in 1713 his tragedy, "Cato"; and two years later his comedy, "The Drummer," for which he paid fifty guineas. In addition, and above all these, he became, in October 1712, joint publisher of the "Spectator" with Samuel Buckley, of the Dolphin in Little Britain,\* who advertised the first number in his "Daily Courant" of that date as follows: "This day will be published a paper entitled 'The Spectator'; which will be continued every day. Printed for Samuel Buckley at the Dolphin in Little Britain, and sold by A. Baldwin in Warwick Lane." From the sixteenth number the imprint stated that it was also sold "by Charles Lillie, Perfumer, at the corner of Beauford Buildings in the Strand."† Tonson's name as joint publisher was added from No. 499. The first two volumes of the revised edition in volume form, "well bound and gilt, two guineas," were issued to subscribers by Buckley and Tonson in January 1712, the third and fourth following in April of the same year. In November 1712 Addison and Steele sold a half share in these four volumes, and in three others not yet published, to Jacob Tonson, junior—old Jacob's nephew and now his partner

\* Buckley, who owned the "Daily Courant"—the first daily newspaper to appear in England—which he had taken over from a bookseller named Mallet, was one of the best known of the early newspaper proprietors. "He was originally a bookseller," says Dunton, "but follows printing. He is an excellent linguist, understands Latin, French, Dutch and Italian tongues, and is master of a great deal of wit. I hear he translates out of the foreign papers himself." In 1714 he disposed of the "Daily Courant" to take over the publication of the "London Gazette."

† G. A. Aitkin's "Life of Richard Steele," 1889. It is added that "there was often a note stating where sets of the back numbers could be obtained, and the increase in the names of shops mentioned shows the continued growth in the sale."

## STEELE AND HIS PUBLISHERS

—for £575, Buckley taking the other half share for a similar sum. Two years later Tonson junior bought Buckley's half for £500. The collected edition of the "Tatler" in volume was also published by the Tonsons, being issued at a guinea a volume on royal paper, and ten shillings on medium paper. The "Guardian" came from the same busy press. According to Pope, Steele threw down that journal on October 1, 1713, because of a quarrel with Tonson; but later authorities regard it as more likely that he gave it up in order to start a paper which would give him a wider political scope. It is significant, however, that the "Englishman, Being the Sequel of the Guardian," the first number of which appeared on October 6, 1713, was published by Samuel Buckley.

One or two references in Steele's correspondence suggest some jovial evenings at the bookseller's shop at Gray's Inn, before the Tonsons moved in 1712 to the Shakespeare Head, in the Strand, opposite Catherine Street. Nor is it very difficult to imagine how "genial Jacob" and "poor Dick Steele"—as Thackeray has called him in one of the most lovable of all his portraits—became closely associated both in business and social relations. Tonson published at the end of 1701 the first of Steele's plays to be produced on the stage, "The Funeral, or Grief-à-la-Mode," and a few years later he is seen writing to "dear Prue" regretting that he is "obliged to dine at Tonson's, where after dinner some papers are to be read, whereof, among others, I am to be a judge." In 1714 we find our "reprehended spouse" writing to have three bottles of his wine removed from the same hospitable house. Alas! alas! he returned this hospitality—according to Mr. Aitkin in the scholarly biography of Steele already alluded to—with a base ingratitude which no one would regret—when too late of course—more than Dick himself. "His frank, hearty nature and his love of companionship led him into temptation; like those around him he some-

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

times indulged in excesses at the table, and he had a natural daughter by a daughter of Tonson the publisher." This could not have been a daughter of Tonson I., for the elder Jacob was childless; but a daughter of the nephew and namesake whom the founder of the House took into partnership after moving to Gray's Inn from Chancery Lane.

It is not always easy to distinguish between Jacob Tonson I. and Jacob Tonson II. in their business dealings after the removal to Shakespeare Head in the Strand, but as the founder appears to have retired from active business in 1720 later references may be assumed to relate to his successor. That being the case it must have fallen to Jacob Tonson II. to publish the most successful of Steele's plays, "The Conscious Lovers," produced at Drury Lane Theatre in November 1722, and printed in December of the following year. In February 1718 Bernard Lintot had entered into an agreement with his old rivals the Tonsons—probably through Tonson junior—to become joint partners in all plays which they should buy after eighteen months following the date of that agreement, and Lintot, accordingly, bought half the copyright of "The Conscious Lovers." \*

Some years before this agreement was signed Bernard Lintot himself had negotiated with Steele for "The Lying Lover," the copyright of which cost him £21 10s. In November 1722 both publishers issued the first collected edition of Steele's "Dramatic Works," part of the edition appearing with title-pages bearing the joint names of Tonson and Lintot, and part with separate title-pages. In 1722 old Jacob Tonson assigned over to his nephew the privileges of his office as stationer, bookbinder, bookseller and printer to a number of the great public offices—privileges which he had secured in 1719-20 as some reward for his devotion to the Whigs. The younger

\* "Athenæum," December 5, 1891, in which there is a letter from Mr. G. A. Aitkin showing that Steele was paid £40 for the copyright of this play.

## A MEMORABLE MEETING

Jacob secured a renewal of the original grant for a further term of forty years, a nice little monopoly which the Tonson family contrived to hold until the end of the century. At one time Jacob Tonson and his nephew held the privilege of printing the "Gazette," but this was taken away from them not long after Steele lost his gazetteership. "Mr. Addison and I have at last met," writes Swift to Stella in telling her on July 26, 1711, of a memorable meeting at the publishers' house; "I dined with him and Steele to-day at young Jacob Tonson's. The two Jacobs think it is I who have made the secretary take from them the privilege of the 'Gazette,' which they are going to lose, and Ben Tooke and another are to have it. Jacob came to me t'other day to make his court; but I told him it was too late; and that it was not my doing." Swift's influence with the Tory ministers at this time was also sought by his old acquaintance Alderman Barber (afterwards Lord Mayor), for whom he had already obtained several lucrative posts. "My printer and bookseller," he writes on January 16, 1712, "want me to hook in another employment for them at the Tower, because it was enjoyed before by a stationer, although it be to serve the Ordnance with oil, tallow, &c., and is worth four hundred pounds per annum more. I will try what I can do. They are resolved to ask several other employments of the same nature. . . . Why am I not a stationer?"\*

Tonson shared his printing in partnership with John Watts, with whom young Benjamin Franklin worked after

\* Swift received £200 for "Gulliver's Travels," but does not appear to have made, or attempted to make, anything else by his numerous other works. These were scattered over a great number of booksellers, both in London and Dublin. "Gulliver" was published with a vast amount of mystification on the part of the author and his friends, Pope having a hand in the business, though the negotiations with the publisher, Benjamin Motte, were conducted by Erasmus Lewis. Eventually the work appeared in November 1726, and sold so rapidly that the whole impression was exhausted in a week.

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

his year's service at Palmer's, in Bartholomew Close. "Here," writes Franklin in his "Autobiography,"

I continued all the rest of my stay in London. At my first admission into a printing-house I took to working at press, imagining I felt a want of the bodily exercise I had been used to in America, where press-work is mixed with the composing. I drank only water; the other workmen, near fifty in number, were great drinkers of beer. On occasion, I carried up and down stairs a large form of types in each hand, when others carried but one in both hands. They wondered to see, from this and similar instances, that the *Water American*, as they called me, was *stronger* than themselves who drank *strong* beer! We had an alehouse boy, who attended always in the house to supply the workmen. My companion at the press drank every day a pint before breakfast, a pint at breakfast with his bread and cheese, a pint between breakfast and dinner, a pint at dinner, a pint in the afternoon about six o'clock, and another when he had done his day's work. I thought it a detestable custom. . . . Watts, after some weeks, desiring to have me in the composing-room, I left the pressmen. . . . From my example, a great many of them left their muddling breakfast of beer, bread, and cheese, finding they could be supplied from a neighbouring house with a large porringer of hot water-gruel, sprinkled with pepper, crumbled with bread, and a bit of butter in it, for the price of a pint of beer, viz., three halfpence. . . . My constant attendance (I never making a St. Monday) recommended me to the master; and my uncommon quickness at composing occasioned my being put upon work of despatch, which was generally better paid. So I went on now very agreeably.

It is quite possible that Jacob Tonson, walking round the printing office with his partner, had this energetic young colonial pointed out to him—little dreaming of the all-important part which he was destined to play in the separation of the American Colonies from the Mother Country.

One government appointment—that of printing the Votes—was shared from 1715 until 1727 between Jacob Tonson, Bernard Lintot, and William Taylor, the last of whom takes us back to Paternoster Row, and links us for the first time with one of the publishing houses of the present day. For it was William Taylor who



## “ROBINSON CRUSOE’S” PUBLISHER

built up the business in Paternoster Row bought by young Thomas Longman in 1724, thus founding the house which exists at the present day on the very site of Taylor's building, and still bears as its emblem the dual sign of the Ship and the Black Swan. These were the signs of the two houses which Taylor had amalgamated out of the profits of "Robinson Crusoe." The first part of that immortal tale was published on April 25, 1719, when Defoe was nearly sixty years old, and a thoroughly discredited man. Taylor's enterprise was at once rewarded, for so great was the run on the book that he had to employ several printers to cope with the demand. Three editions were exhausted within four months, bringing the publisher the handsome profit of over a thousand pounds. The second part appeared in August of the same year, and a third part, containing the "Serious Reflections of Robinson Crusoe"—now rarely printed with the narrative proper—in the following year. Taylor, like his successors at the Ship and Black Swan at the present day, published books in all departments of literature, and carried on his business until 1724, when, as already stated, he was succeeded by Thomas Longman, then in his twenty-fifth year.\* Thirteen years previously was founded another famous publishing firm—the House of Rivington—Charles Rivington taking over in 1711 the business of Richard Chiswell the Elder, of the Rose and Crown, in St. Paul's Churchyard, and hoisting his own sign of the Bible and Crown in Paternoster Row, where he soon became the leading theological publisher in London.†

Tonson's chief rival, however, was the Bernard Lintot already alluded to—Barnaby Bernard Lintot, to give

\* The full story of the House of Longmans is one of the books that ought to be written, for there must be an immense amount of valuable unpublished material among the archives of the firm. A connected sketch of its history will be found on p. 362.

† The House of Rivington remained the oldest in the trade until the year 1890, when the business was bought by Longmans, who thus succeeded to the undisputed honours of seniority.

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

him his name in full. He was nearly twenty years younger than Jacob senior, and was not made free of the Stationers' Company until shortly before Dryden's death. He opened his shop not long afterwards at the sign of the Cross Keys, between the Temple Gates, in Fleet Street. Among his early investments, as shown in his account-book, were a third share of Cibber's "Love's Last Shift" (1701), which cost him £3 4s. 6d.; a half share of Dennis's "Liberty Asserted" (1704) for £7 3s.; the whole of the same author's "Appius and Virginia" (1705) for £21 10s.; and a seventh share of Captain Cook's "Voyages" (1711), which he bought of a Mr. Gosling for £7 3s. Gay's first entry in the account-book is for his "Wife of Bath," which cost the publisher on May 12, 1713, £25, and a later entry shows that for the revival of the "Wife of Bath" he paid another £75. The same author's "Trivia" cost him £43 in December 1715, and his "Three Hours after Marriage," on January 8, 1717, £43 2s. 6d. Long before this date Lintot had begun the association with Pope which, more than anything else, was to make him famous. Pope was one of old Jacob Tonson's disappointments. As early as 1706, while Pope was still in his teens, Tonson had spread his net for him in a letter of diplomatic politeness, in which, after mentioning that he had been shown the manuscript of one of his "Pastorals," which he thought "extremely fine," he added: "I remember I have formerly seen you in my shop, and am sorry I did not improve my acquaintance with you. If you design your poem for the press, no one shall be more careful in printing it, nor no one can give greater encouragement to it than, Sir," etc. The letter succeeded, the "Pastorals" finding their way into Tonson's "Miscellany" in 1709, and Pope himself into Tonson's mixed band of "eminent hands." "I shall be satisfied," he writes on May 20, 1709, to Wycherley, who had introduced him to town life, "if I can lose my time agreeably this way, without losing my reputation. I can be content with a bare

## LINTOT'S ACCOUNT-BOOK

saving game, without being thought an *eminent hand* (with which little Jacob has graciously dignified his adventurers and volunteers in poetry). Jacob creates poets, as kings do knights, not for their honour, but for their money."

"You will make 'Jacob's Ladder' raise you to immortality," was Wycherley's reply. But the young and inconstant Pope not only took his anonymous "Essay on Criticism" to an obscure bookseller named Lewis,\* who published it in 1711, but allowed the first edition of the "Rape of the Lock," besides other pieces, to appear in Bernard Lintot's rival "Miscellanies" in 1712. This was the beginning of a regular connexion which may be clearly traced in Lintot's account-book. Here are some of the items and the amounts paid for them by the publisher :

	£	s.	d.
Windsor Forest (Feb. 1713)	32	5	0
Ode on St. Cecilia's Day (July 1713)	15	0	0
Additions to the "Rape" (Feb. 1714)	15	0	0
Temple of Fame (Feb. 1715)	32	5	0
Key to the Lock (April 1715)	10	15	0

More important than all these was Pope's acceptance of Lintot's offer in 1714 to publish his translation of Homer's "Iliad," on terms which were far in advance of anything that Tonson had ever paid Dryden. Pope and his friends had already ensured its financial success by securing a list of subscribers of unprecedented strength.

\* Lewis was a Catholic bookseller in Covent Garden, and Isaac Disraeli, in his "Quarrels of Authors," tells an interesting story in this connexion. "From a descendant of this Lewis," he writes, "I heard that Pope, after publication, came every day, persecuting with anxious inquiries the cold impenetrable bookseller, who, as the poem lay uncalled for, saw nothing but vexatious importunities in a troublesome youth. One day Pope, after nearly a month's publication, entered, and in despair tied up a number of the poems, which he addressed to several who had a reputation in town as judges of poetry. The scheme succeeded, and the poem, having reached its proper circle, soon got into request." In 1716 a new edition was published conjointly by Lewis and Lintot, the last of whom paid £15 for the privilege.

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

The poet had issued his proposals for the translation in October 1713, and Swift worked as hard as any one to secure the support of his political friends ; but the leaders of both parties were included in the list, together with a host of patrons among the nobility. Lintot paid Pope £200 for each of the six volumes, and supplied him free of cost with all the copies for his subscribers, as well as presentation copies.

Bookselling by subscription on these lines continued right through the eighteenth century, authors issuing their "Proposals" themselves, and getting as many influential friends as possible to tout for subscribers. It was the next thing, indeed, to becoming their own publishers, but though it occasionally accounted for such sums as were received in this way by Pope, it did not tend to increase the dignity of the profession. "He that asks subscriptions," said Johnson, who made a bed of thorns for himself when he undertook the subscription edition of "Shakespeare" in the middle of the century, "soon finds that he has enemies. All who do not encourage him defame him." And gradually the system fell into disuse, subscribing, with occasional exceptions, being now left entirely to the publisher. According to Johnson, Pope received altogether for the "Iliad," from first to last, no less than £5,320, though the publisher's own memorandum-book, quoted by Nichols, makes the total not much more than £4,000. In either case it was enough to lay the foundation of a very substantial fortune. Lintot apparently was not so happy in his bargain. "It is unpleasant to relate," says Nichols in his "Literary Anecdotes," "that the bookseller, after all his hopes, and all his liberality, was, by a very unjust and illegal action, defrauded of his profit. An edition of the 'Iliad' was printed in Holland in duodecimo and imported clandestinely for the gratification of those who were impatient to read what they could not afford to buy." \* This action

\* Lintot's original edition was published at a guinea for each of the six volumes. The first volume appeared in June 1715 ; the last in May 1720.

## POPE AND LINTOT

compelled Lintot to bring out a still cheaper edition, which seems to have had a very large sale, but at a price so low as not to be profitable. It was the "Iliad" which led to Pope's so-called quarrel with Addison, whom he unjustly suspected of being the real author of Tickell's version of the same work, the first volume of which was published by Tonson three days after the announcement that Pope had finished the first volume of his translation.

For the copyright of the "Odyssey," for which Pope issued his proposals in January 1725, Lintot only paid the poet half what he had been ready to give for the "Iliad," and trouble ensued in connexion with Pope's collaborators, William Browne and Elijah Fenton. Pope's net profits amounted to £4,500, out of which he had to pay Browne and Fenton something like £700. Pope and Browne called Lintot a scoundrel, and other harsh names, because he declined to provide free copies for Browne's subscribers as well as Pope's; Lintot threatened a suit in Chancery; and the end of it all was their separation, and the poet's ignoble taunt in the "Dunciad." Accounts differ, however, as to the real origin of Pope's spite against Lintot. "Undoubtedly," says Nichols, "at this time Pope had conceived a very ill impression of his *quondam* bookseller. His principal delinquency seems to have been that he was a stout man, clumsily made, not a very considerable scholar, and that he filled his shop with rubric posts." Pope refers more than once to these bookseller's posts, adorned with red advertisements of the latest publications:

What though my name stood rubric on the walls,  
Or plastered posts, with clasps, in capitals.

Which takes us back to Ben Jonson's good-humoured protest against the enterprising dodges of his own bookseller (*see* p. 130), and farther back still to the advertisement posts of the classic bookshops of ancient Rome. Dr. Young, whose good testimonial regarding Lintot's moral character we have already quoted, shows him in



## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

another light in an anecdote which is given by Spence on Young's own authority : " Tonson and Lintot were both candidates for printing some work of Dr. Young's. He answered both letters in the same morning, and in his hurry misdirected them. When Lintot opened that which came to him he found it begin : ' That Bernard Lintot is so great a scoundrel, that,' &c. It must have been very amusing to have seen him in his rage ; he was a great sputtering fellow." Dr. Young's sense of humour is a little difficult to understand, but publisher-baiting was then a favourite sport among authors who could afford to indulge in it. Pope himself is more good-tempered on the subject in the familiar letter to the Earl of Burlington, in which he describes a long imaginary conversation with " the enterprising Mr. Lintot, the redoubtable rival of Mr. Tonson," though this was written before the quarrel. A more reliable story is told by Knight of a curious scheme in which the Dean and Chapter of Christ Church, Oxford, entered into an engagement with Lintot that he should print by subscription John Urry's edition of Chaucer, dividing the profits with the Dean and Chapter in order that they might finish the Peckwater Quadrangle :

Mr. Urry, a student of Christ Church, had obtained a patent for the exclusive printing of his edition, which he assigned, in 1714, to Bernard Lintot. But this ingenious Scotsman dying in 1715, his executors, in conjunction with the authorities of Christ Church, concluded this agreement with the bookseller, it having been the intention of Mr. Urry to devote £500 to the purpose that the Dean and Chapter subsequently contemplated.

The edition has been described as the worst text of Chaucer ever issued. It was published in folio in 1721, but it does not appear whether the promoters realised their anticipated share of the profit. Among other works published by Lintot were poems and plays for Farquhar, Fenton, and Rowe—to whom he paid £50 15s. for " Jane Shore," and £75 5s. for " Lady Jane Grey." He retired not long after his appearance in the " Dunciad " of 1728,

## “LEFT-LEGGED JACOB”

evidently well content with the results of his business, for he settled down in some considerable style in Sussex. Here, in November 1735, he was nominated High Sheriff for the county, but, dying in the following February, was succeeded in that office by his son Henry, who carried on his father's business until his own death in 1758.

Pope, to hark back to earlier days, returned for a time to his old publishers, the Tonsons, to edit their edition of Shakespeare in six quarto volumes, in 1725, receiving as editor £217 12s. The volume was not particularly successful. Only about 600 copies were sold at the original price, out of a total edition of 750, the balance having to be “remaindered.” “Old Jacob Tonson,” wrote Pope to a correspondent in 1731, “is the perfect image and likeness of Bayle's Dictionary, so full of matter, secret history, and wit and spirit, at almost fourscore.” Tonson had retired ten or eleven years before this, leaving the business to be carried on by his nephew and namesake. Like Thomas Guy, the elder Tonson had amassed, apart from any profits that he may have made as a publisher, a large fortune by South Sea stock and other investments, notably in Law's Mississippi Scheme. By a strange coincidence he died within two months of his old rival Bernard Lintot—on April 2, 1736.

Outwardly they were a curious, misshapen breed of men, these early publishers of the eighteenth century, if we are to accept the lines by which, to their sorrow, they have been handed down to posterity. Dryden, in one of his financial squabbles with Tonson, who would not satisfy all his demands for money, is said to have sent him the following lines, with the threatening message: “Tell the dog that he who wrote these lines can write more”:

With leering looks, bull-faced, and freckled fair;  
With two left legs and Judas-coloured hair,  
And frowzy pores, that taint the ambient air.

The lines are from a satirical fragment attributed to Dryden and preserved in a Tory poem published as a

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

joint attack on the Kit Cat Club and its bookseller-secretary. Jacob's unfortunate legs seem to have offered a fair mark for the satirist, for we find them again in Pope's "Dunciad," following his portrait of "great Lintot":

As when a dab-chick waddles through the copse  
On feet and wings, and flies, and wades, and hops ;  
So lab'ring on, with shoulders, hands, and head,  
Wide as a windmill all his figure spread,  
With arms expanded, Bernard rows his state,  
And left-legg'd Jacob seems to emulate.

Himself misshapen—"a crooked mind in a crooked body"—Pope, as he dipped his pen in gall, seemed to gloat over any physical peculiarity in his victims. But Pope could not be more virulent in this respect than Thomas Amory, when damning Curll to unenviable immortality. "Curll," writes Amory, in his curious, autobiographical romance of "John Bunclé," "was in person very tall and thin—an ungainly, awkward, white-faced man. His eyes were a light grey—large, projecting, goggle, and purblind. He was splay-footed and baker-kneed"—whatever baker-kneed may be. "He was a debauchee to the last degree," adds the same authority, "and so injurious to society, that by filling his translations with wretched notes, forged letters, and bad pictures, he raised the price of a four shilling book to ten. Thus, in particular, he managed Burnet's 'Archæology.' And when I told him he was very culpable in this and other articles he sold, his answer was, 'what would I have him to do? He was a bookseller; his translators in pay lay three in a bed at the Pewter Platter Inn, in Holborn, and he and they were for ever at work to deceive the public. He likewise printed the lewdest things. . . . As to drink, he was too fond of money to spend any in making himself happy that way; but at another's expense he would drink every day till he was quite blind and as incapable as a block. This was Edmund Curll. But he died at last as great a penitent (I think

## CURLL v. POPE

in the year 1748) as ever expired. I mention this to his glory."

"Left-legged Jacob"—or "Genial Jacob," as Pope calls him in another passage—suffered from the "Dunciad" less than most of the unfortunate booksellers with whom "Pope Alexander" had any dealings. Edmund Curll, his particular *bête noir* in the bookselling world, was better able to retaliate than Tonson or Lintot. Pope "has a knack at versifying" admitted Curll with consummate coolness, when called to appear at the bar of the House for publishing his enemy's correspondence, "but in prose I think myself a match for him"; and indeed he did his best, all through his long squabble with the irascible poet, to give as good as he received. His unabashed retaliations probably amused his contemporaries as much as Pope's venomous abuse, but posterity only remembers the "Dunciad's" unsavoury description:

Obscure with filth the miscreant lies bewrayed,  
Fall'n in the plash his wickedness had laid.

Edmund Curll probably deserved all that he received, but it must not be forgotten that he lived in a licentious age; that indecent books were read and discussed by every one; and that he was not much worse than many others of his kind. Pope, like his friend Swift, had a glass house of his own when he started to throw stones at Curll for indecency.

Curll had been trained in the unprotected days when a bookseller, were he so minded, could break all bounds of decency and honour with little risk of the law's interference. The only knowledge of his early career that we possess is that "he was born in the west of England, and, after passing through several menial capacities, arrived at the degree of a bookseller's man. He afterwards kept a stall, and then took a shop in the purlieu of Covent Garden."\* But he changed his address

\* "New and General Biographical Dictionary," 1798

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so often that it is not easy to follow him in all his wanderings. The late W. J. Thoms, whose "Curll Papers"—"stray notes on the life and publications of Edmund Curll" which he reprinted from "Notes and Queries" for private circulation in 1879—now form, with Charles Wentworth Dilke's writings on Pope's career, our best source of information on the subject, gives a list which shows the bookseller associating in 1708\* with E. Sanger at the Post House at the Middle Temple Gate, and at the Peacock without Temple Bar. In the following year he gives Temple Bar as his address for a quack medical book entitled "The Charitable Surgeon," Curll at that time combining his bookselling trade with that of a small business in pills and powders—a combination not unknown either before then or since. By 1710 his address was at the Dial and Bible against St. Dunstan's Church, Fleet Street—formerly the address of another bookseller, A. Bosvill—where, among other things, he published Swift's "Meditations upon a Broomstick" and "A Complete Key to the 'Tale of a Tub.'" Ten years later he was in Paternoster Row, issuing there, in 1720, Jacob's "Lives of the Poets"; and in 1723 he came down to the Strand, where he remained "over against Catherine Street" for the next five years. In 1729 he is spoken of as living "next to Will's Coffee House, in Bow Street," where, in the following year, he published Congreve's Last Will and Testament. He could not have remained there long, for in 1733 his address was in Burghley Street, Strand, whence he appears to have shifted to Rose Street, Covent Garden, when he published his notorious collection of Pope's Letters, his advertisements in the papers announcing their publication being addressed: "From Pope's Head, in Rose Street, Covent Garden, July 20, 1735." Hence, as Thoms points out, the allusion in the "Dunciad":

Down with the Bible, up with the Pope's Arms.

\* The earliest date, it is believed, on any of his title-pages.



## THE "POISONING" OF CURLL

This was characteristic of Curll's method of open warfare. "I have engraven a new plate of Mr. Pope's head from Mr. Jervas's painting," he wrote: "and likewise intend to hang him up in effigy for a sign to all spectators of his falsehood and my veracity, which I will always maintain, under the Scots' motto, *Nemo me impune lacessit*." Curll and Pope had been deadly enemies years before the affair of the letters. The feud began with the "Court Poems," published in the spring of 1716 by James Roberts, of Warwick Lane, though the profits, apparently, were to be divided between Curll and two other booksellers, John Oldmixon and John Pemberton. This was the privately printed edition of the pieces by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, afterwards published as "Town Eclogues." We need not give the whole of its complicated history, with the side issue of its effect on the relations between Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and Pope. Curll and Pope have both given their own versions of the so-called "poisoning," which the poet inflicted on the publisher when he heard that Curll had had a hand in the publication of the book. Pope's "Full and True Account of a Horrid and Barbarous Revenge by Poison on the Body of Mr. Edmund Curll, Bookseller, with a faithful Copy of his last Will and Testament," was published in Pope and Swift's "Miscellanies," and much of it will hardly bear reprinting, but the following passages may be quoted:

History furnishes us with Examples of many Satyrical Authors who have fallen Sacrifices to Revenge, but not of any Booksellers that I know of, except the unfortunate Subject of the following Paper; I mean Mr. Edmund Curll, at the Bible and Dial in Fleetstreet, who was yesterday poison'd by Mr. Pope, after having liv'd many Years an Instance of the mild Temper of the British Nation. Every Body knows that the said Mr. Edmund Curll, on Monday the 26th Instant, publish'd a Satyrical Piece, entituled Court Poems, in the preface whereof they were attributed to a Lady of Quality, Mr. Pope, or Mr. Gay; by which indiscreet Method, though he had escap'd one Revenge, there were still two behind in reserve. Now on the Wednesday ensuing, between

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

the Hours of Ten and Eleven, Mr. Lintott, a neighb'ring Bookseller, desir'd a Conference with Mr. Curll about settling a Title-Page, inviting him at the same Time to take a Whet together. Mr. Pope, (who is not the only Instance how Persons of bright Parts may be carry'd away by the Instigation of the Devil) found means to convey himself into the same Room, under pretence of Business with Mr. Lintott, who it seems is the Printer of his Homer. This Gentleman, with seeming Coolness, reprimanded Mr. Curll for wrongfully ascribing to him the aforesaid Poems: He excused himself by declaring that one of his Authors (Mr. Oldmixon by Name) gave the Copies to the Press, and wrote the Preface. Upon this Mr. Pope (being to all appearance reconcil'd) very civilly drank a Glass of Sack to Mr. Curll, which he as civilly pledged; and tho' the liquor in Colour and Taste differ'd not from common Sack, yet was it plain by the Pangs this unhappy Stationer felt soon after, that some poisonous Drug had been secretly infused therein.

In a note in the "Dunciad" the same poet alleged that, "being first threaten'd and afterwards punish'd for intending to publish the 'Court Poems' as by 'A Lady of Quality,' Curll transferred it from her to him, and has now printed it twelve years in his name." Curll retorted in the "Curliad" by declaring that the whole of this charge was false.

The matter of fact [he writes] stands thus: About the year 1715, Mr. Joseph Jacobs (late of Hoxton, the Founder of a Remarkable Sect called the Whiskers) gave to Mr. John Oldmixon three Poems at that time handed about, entitled The Bassett Table, The Toilet, and the Drawing Room. These Pieces were printed in Octavo, and published by Mr. James Roberts, near the Oxford Arms in Warwick Lane, under the Title of Court Poems. The Profit arising from the Sale was equally to be divided between Mr. John Oldmixon, Mr. John Pemberton (a Bookseller of Parliamentary Note in Fleet Street, tho' he has not had the good fortune to be immortalized in the Dunciad), and myself. And I am sure my Brother Lintot will, if asked, declare this to be the same state of the Case I laid before Mr. Pope, when he sent for me to the Swan Tavern in Fleet Street to enquire after this Publication. My brother Lintot drank his half Pint of Old Hock, Mr. Pope his half Pint of Sack, and I the same quantity of an Emetic Potion (which was the punishment referred to by

## CURLL TOSSED IN A BLANKET

our Commentator), but no threatenings past. Mr. Pope, indeed, said, that Satires should not be printed (tho' he has now changed his mind). I answered, they should not be wrote, for if they were, they would be printed. He replied, Mr. Gay's Interest at Court would be greatly hurt by publishing these Pieces. This was all that passed in our Triumvirate. We then parted, Pope and my brother Lintot went together, to his Shop, and I went home and vomited heartily. I then despised the Action and have since in another manner sufficiently Purged the Author of it. In the Advertisement prefixt to the Court Poems, the Hearsay of the Town is only recited, some attributing them to a Lady of Quality, others to Mr. Gay, but the Country-confirmation was (Chelsea being named) that the Lines could come from no other hand than the laudable Translator of Homer. This is a Demonstration of the Falsehood of our Commentator's Assertion, that any transfer was made, from a Lady to Mr. Pope, they being originally charged upon him as his lawful issue; and so I shall continue his Fame, having lately printed a new Edition of them and added them to his Letters, which come next under consideration.

Before dealing with Pope's Letters, however, it may be as well to say something more about Curll's earlier record. The year in which the memorable meeting took place in the Swan Tavern, in Fleet Street, saw the bookseller tossed in a blanket by the Westminster scholars for printing, without permission, a funeral oration delivered by the captain of the school. The story of his humiliation at their hands is best told in the following letter, which is printed by Thoms from the "St. James's Post" of that year:

KING'S COLLEGE, WESTMINSTER.

*August 3, 1716.*

SIR,—You are desired to acquaint the public that a certain bookseller near Temple Bar, not taking warning by the frequent drubs that he has undergone for his often pirating other men's copies, did lately, without the consent of Mr. John Barber, present Captain of Westminster School, publish the scraps of a Funeral Oration, spoken by him over the corpse of the Rev. Dr. South. And being on Thursday last fortunately nabbed within the limits of Dean's Yard, by the King's Scholars there, he met with a college salutation, for he was first presented with the

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

ceremony of the blanket, in which, when the skeleton had been well shook, he was carried in triumph to the School; and after receiving a grammatical construction for his false concords, he was reconducted to Dean's Yard, and on his knees asking pardon of the aforesaid Mr. Barber for his offence, he was kicked out of the Yard, and left to the huzzas of the rabble.

I am, Sir, yours, etc.

T. A.

In the same unlucky year Curll also made his first appearance at the Bar of the House of Lords. This was for printing an account of the trial for high treason of the Earl of Wintoun, the privilege of which had been granted to Jacob Tonson, who had issued it at a price which only a monopolist could afford to charge. Curll's attempt at underselling brought him on his knees before the Lord Chancellor, but the reprimand which he then received does not appear to have had any permanent effect, for he was at once busy again in other disreputable practices. His notoriety in his own day as a publisher of indecent books is nowhere better shown than in the following passage on the "sin of Curlicism" which appeared in "Mist's Journal" of April 5, 1718:

There is indeed but one bookseller eminent among us for this abomination, and from him the crime takes the just denomination of Curlicism. The fellow is a contemptible wretch a thousand ways: he is odious in his person, scandalous in his fame: he is marked by Nature, for he has a bawdy countenance, and a debauched mien; his tongue is an echo of all the beastly language his shop is filled with, and filthiness drivels in the very tone of his voice. But what is the meaning that this manufacturer of — is permitted in a civilised nation to go unpunished, and that the abominable Catalogue is unsuppressed, in a country where religion is talked of (little more, God knows!), whose government is formed by wholesome laws, where king's obstruct not the execution of the law; where justice may, if duly prompted, take hold of him: I say, Mist, what can be the reason such a criminal goes unpunished? How can our Stamp office take twelve pence a piece for the advertisement of his infamous books, publishing the continued increase of lewd abominable pieces of bawdry, such as none can read even in miniature, for such an



## “BEASTLY, UNSUFFERABLE BOOKS”

Advertisement is to a book. How can these refrain informing the government what mines are laid to blow up morality, even from its very foundation, and to sap the basis of all good manners, nay, and in the end, of religion itself.

Where sleep the watchmen of Israel, that not one divine of the Church of England—not one teacher among the dissenters—has touched this crying curse? O Bangor! O Bradbury! how much better had the kingdom of Christ been established, had you attacked the agents of hell that propagate the kingdom of the devil, instead of snarling about who are, or who are not, vested with effectual power to act this way or that way in the Church, or in the State? How much more like “preachers of righteousness” had ye appeared, if, as far as became you, ye had laboured to establish our youth in virtue and piety, and so suppressed the spreading abominable vices by the agency of the printing-press!

In a word, Mist, record it for posterity to wonder at, that in four years past of the blessed days we live in, and wherein justice and liberty are flourishing and established, more beastly unsufferable books have been published by this one offender, than in thirty years before by all the nation; and not a man, clergyman or other, has yet thought it worth his while to demand justice of the government against the crime of it, or so much as to caution the age against the mischief of it. Publish this, Mist, as you value your promise, and remember you’ll be honoured with having put the first hand to correct a crime which begins to make us scandalous to our neighbours, and, in time, if not prevented, will make us detestable among all the Christian nations of Europe.

Your friend,

H.

Curll replied to this with characteristic audacity, declaring that he was neither concerned nor ashamed to have his books distinguished by the name of “Curlicism.” Both Nichols and Thoms, without seriously attempting to whitewash the character of “the infamous, the dauntless, the shameless Edmund Curll”—as Lord Campbell called him in his speech of July 28, 1845, when the Order against publishing the works, life, or last will of any member of the House of Lords was rescinded\*—have made

\* Curll paid his second visit to the House of Lords in 1722 for announcing that he intended to publish the late Duke of Buckingham’s works; which led to the passing of the Standing Order forbidding any publication of the kind without the authority of a peer’s executors, or other legal representative.



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some attempt to show that he was not quite so black as he was painted. Political feeling may, as Thoms remarks, have had something to do with the attack in "Mist's Journal," for Curll and the paper belonged to opposite factions. And he may have undertaken his occasional religious ventures as some sort of sop to his conscience ; but when all is said and done in his favour he remains an ugly blot on the history of eighteenth-century bookselling. On November 30, 1725, he was convicted of "printing and publishing several obscene and immodest books, greatly tending to the corruption and degradation of manners," including "The Nun in her Smock," but was not, as commonly stated, "set in the pillory as he well deserved" for this offence, but, after five months' imprisonment, fined fifty marks and kept in surety of £100 for his good behaviour for one year. It was for the political offence of publishing the "Memoirs of John Ker of Kersland," as Mr. Thoms clearly proves, that he was ordered, at the same time, "to pay a fine of twenty marks, to stand in the pillory for the space of one hour, and his own recognizance to be taken for his good behaviour for another year."

The "Dunciad," in which Curll was pilloried after another fashion, made its appearance with all the air of mystery with which both Pope and Swift delighted to surround the origin of their satires. It was published anonymously on May 28, 1728, professing to be the work of a friend of Pope, and a reprint of a Dublin edition. How great a stir it made in London on its publication is seen in a contemporary account attributed to Pope himself, though said to have been written by Richard Savage :

On the day the book was first vended a crowd of authors besieged the shop ; entreaties, advices, threats of law and battery, nay, cries of treason, were all employed to hinder the coming out of "The Dunciad." On the other side, the booksellers and hawkers made as great an effort to procure it. What could a few poor authors do against so great a majority as the public ! There was



INDIGNANT AUTHORS BESIEGING  
THE PUBLISHER'S TO PREVENT  
THE PUBLICATION OF THE  
"DUNCIAD"

*From Carruthers's "Life of Alexander Pope"*



## THE PUBLICATION OF POPE'S "DUNCIAD"

no stopping a torrent with a finger, so out it came. Many ludicrous circumstances attended it. The Dunces (for by this name they were called) held weekly clubs to consult of hostilities against the author. One wrote a letter to a great Minister, that Mr. Pope was the greatest enemy the Government had; and another bought his image in clay, to execute him in effigy; with which sad sort of satisfaction the gentlemen were a little comforted. Some false editions of the book having an owl in their frontispiece; the true one, to distinguish it, fixed in its stead an ass laden with authors. Then another surreptitious one being printed with the same ass, the new edition in octavo returned for distinction to the owl again. Hence arose a great contest of booksellers against booksellers, and advertisements against advertisements; some recommending the edition of the owl, and others the edition of the ass, by which names they came to be distinguished, to the great honour also of the gentlemen of "The Dunciad."

Pope published the enlarged edition of the "Dunciad" in March 1729, assigning the property to Lord Bathurst, Lord Burlington, and Lord Oxford, and copies could only be obtained through them. Later in the same year, when there seemed to be no longer any risk of publication, they re-assigned the property to Lawton Gilliver, who, having now become Pope's publisher, issued a new edition in November, though Pope himself did not openly acknowledge the poem until it appeared in his *Collected Works* in 1735. The complete history of the publication of Pope's correspondence, in which the poet, by tortuous intrigues which were quite beyond the ingenuity of the bookseller, surreptitiously made Curll his publisher, and then had him summoned before the House of Lords, would fill a whole chapter by itself. The true facts have only come to light within comparatively recent years, but there is no doubt that he merely used Curll in this matter in order that he might gratify his insatiable vanity by publishing an authorised edition of his letters. Curll had published in 1726 the "Familiar Letters" addressed by Pope in his youth to his friend Henry Cromwell, the originals of which had been bought by the bookseller for ten guineas from a Mrs. Thomas, who had been

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

Cromwell's mistress. Whether Pope seriously objected to the publication of these letters or not does not matter. They undoubtedly suggested Curll as the agent who should publish his "Literary Correspondence for Thirty Years." This appeared in 1735, and Pope secretly arranged that the collection should be announced as including a number of letters of Peers, which he knew to be an offence against the law. Though careful enough to arrange that no such letters were actually sent to Curll for the purpose, Pope nevertheless saw to it that the books were seized on publication by a warrant from the House of Lords, and the publisher himself summoned to explain what he meant by his advertisement. Curll in defence pleaded ignorance. He explained that the advertisement was sent to him with instructions to copy it and have it inserted in the papers. All he knew about the person who sent it was that he signed himself "P. T." He told the Lords that he wrote to Pope to acquaint him that a Gentleman, who signed himself "P. T.," had offered him a large collection of his (Pope's) letters to print. "That Mr. Pope did not send him any answer to his letter, but put an Advertisement in The Daily Post Boy, that he had received such a letter from E. C. That he knew no such Person as P. T. That he believ'd nobody had such a collection of letters, but that it was a Forgery, and that he should not trouble himself about it ; And then read an Advertisement which he put into The Post Boy in answer to the said Advertisement of Mr Pope." \*

In the end the Lords, finding that the book did not, as announced, contain any letters of Peers, and thus was not contrary to the Standing Order of the House referred to on p. 221 (footnote), dismissed the publisher and ordered the copies to be returned to him. The Lords and the bookseller, however, had served Pope's purpose, and he at once proceeded to prepare his "authorised" edition. Curll, nothing abashed, and determined also to profit by the publicity given to the affair, boldly announced his

\* From the Proceedings in the "Lords' Journals."



## CURLL'S DEFENCE

intention to publish a third volume in the following advertisement :

### E. CURLL TO THE PUBLIC

FROM POPE'S HEAD, IN ROSE STREET,  
COVENT-GARDEN, *July 26th, 1735.*

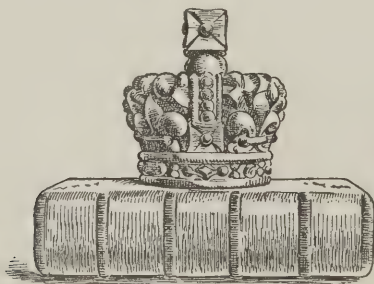
Mr. Pope having put me under a necessity of using him as he deserves, I hereby declare that the First Volume of his Letters which I publish'd on the 12th of May last, was sent me ready printed by himself, and for six hundred of which I contracted with his Agent R. Smythe, who came to me in the habit of a clergyman. I paid the said R. Smythe half the sum contracted for, and have his Receipt in full for Three Hundred Books, tho' it has since, by him, been honestly own'd that he delivered me but Two Hundred and Forty Books, and those all imperfect. For this Treatment I shall have Recourse to a Legal Remedy. Mr. Pope, in the Grub-street Journal (a Libel wherein he has been concerned from its Original), the Daily Journal and the Daily Post Boy declared these letters to be Forgeries, and complained of them to the House of Lords; which Falsehood was detected before that most August Assembly; and, upon my Acquittal, he publishes a very idle Narrative of a Robbery committed upon two Manuscripts—one on his own, and the other in the Earl of Oxford's Library. This Fallacy being likewise expos'd, he now Advertises he shall with all convenient speed publish some Letters himself, particularly relating to his correspondence with the Bishop of Rochester. But the Public may be assured that, if any Letters Mr. Pope himself, or any of his Tools, shall think fit to publish, are the same, or any way interfere, with those I have publish'd, that the same shall be instantly reprinted by me.

The Second Volume of Mr. Pope's Literary Correspondence contains the Remainder of his own Letters to Henry Cromwell, Esq., Bishop Atterbury's Letters to Mr. Pope, and some other curious Pieces which I had of his Son. Also, Original Letters to, and from, Ld. Somers, Ld. Parker, Ld. Harrington, Judge Parrys, Sir R. Steele, Mr. Prior, Mr. Addison, etc., with which, I presume, Mr. Pope has not anything to do. The Third Volume of Mr. Pope's Literary Correspondence, I shall publish next Month, ORIGINALS being every day sent to me, some of them, to a certain DUCHESS, which I am ready to produce under his own Hand. I know not what Honours Mr. Pope would have conferr'd on him:—1st I have hung up his Head for my Sign; and, 2ndly, I have engraved a fine view of his House, Gardens, etc., from

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

Mr. Rijsbrack's Painting, which will shortly be publish'd. But if he aims at any further Artifices, he never found himself more mistaken than he will in trifling with Me.

And Curll was as good as his word. He added volume after volume—with much extraneous matter—until he had a whole series of six in stock; and in the fifth of these he had the effrontery to criticise the textual accuracy—not without a certain amount of truth—of Pope's authorised edition. "Many considerable passages are omitted," he declares, among other things; "others are interpolated; and upon the whole the *Genuine Edition* is so far from an *authentic one* that it is only a *Select Collection* of Mr. Pope's Letters, more old letters being omitted than new ones added." Pope's own edition appeared in May 1737 and the copyright was bought by Robert Dodsley the publisher, who may be said to have followed old Jacob Tonson in the "apostolic succession." Jacob, now spending his last days in retirement, lived until the following April, surviving his nephew and successor rather more than four months, the business being carried on by the son of Jacob Tonson Junior—Jacob Tonson III. Bernard Lintot had also been succeeded by his son Henry, and the great traditions of both houses were passing away.



THE BIBLE AND CROWN

THE OLDEST PUBLISHING SIGN IN LONDON, UNDER WHICH THE RIVINGTONS TRADED FOR A CENTURY AND THREE-QUARTERS. IT IS NOW IN THE POSSESSION OF THEIR SUCCESSORS, MESSRS. LONGMANS

## CHAPTER TEN : IN DR. JOHNSON'S DAY

IT was a ripe moment for the right man, and Robert Dodsley, who holds a place apart in the book-selling annals of the eighteenth century, made the most of his opportunity. The generality of his craft in that Golden Age may be roughly divided into two distinct classes. To one of these belonged such notorious members as Edmund Curll, and his lineal descendant, Ralph Griffiths, who tortured poor Goldsmith's soul in his poverty-stricken Grub Street days. The other class included such publishers as Bernard Lintot and Jacob Tonson, men who were practically the fathers of the modern book trade, possessing the first real sense of the rights of authorship and a proper respect for the dignity of letters. None of these, however, had anything of the true literary instinct, and it was this possession which gave Robert Dodsley his unique position. He strayed into poetry while still in his footman's livery, and it was probably because he did not disguise this fact that his earliest appearances in print, beginning with "Servitude" in 1729, and including "A Muse in Livery; or, The Footman's Miscellany" (1732), won for him many influential friends, not only among people of quality, to whom anything in the shape of novelty was welcome, but among such authors as Daniel Defoe and Alexander Pope. Defoe, who was then sixty-eight, took an interest in the footman-poet from the first, young Dodsley having found some means of obtaining access to him. According to Lee's "Life of Daniel Defoe" (1869), he "not only revised the poem ["Servitude"], but also—seeing it would not fill a sheet, wrote a preface and introduction of some ten pages, and then kindly added, as a postscript, six pages of quiet banter on his own popular tract [his recently published "Every Body's Business"], in order to give his humble *protégé* the reflex benefit of such popularity."

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

It is probable that he also assisted in the publication of the pamphlet, which was issued by the bookseller Thomas Worrall. Success turned Dodsley's ambitious thoughts to playwriting. He wrote "The Toy-Shop," and after issuing his "Muse in Livery" in 1732, ventured to send the play to Pope for his opinion as to its merits. Pope did more than Dodsley asked him; he recommended it to John Rich, who was then preparing to move to his new theatre in Covent Garden. It is not difficult to imagine Dodsley's delight when he read Pope's letter. If fame and fortune were not already in his grasp, they were surely near enough to demand that he should go to meet them in other than lacquey's livery. Exactly when he left service, however, or what he did personally before embarking, in 1735, upon his career as a bookseller, is not known. As for the "Toy-Shop," which he described as a "dramatic satire," it was not produced on the stage until February 3 of that year; but it scored an immediate success, and did even better in book form when published, for the first time, three days later, by Lawton Gilliver, Pope's latest publisher, who had already issued several small volumes of Dodsley's verse. The book went through four editions within its first two months, and was only taken over by Dodsley himself when it reached its eighth edition. More important than the number of its editions, it secured for Dodsley, according to his latest and best biographer, Mr. Straus,\* the money he needed, "and with that, his own small savings, and a present from Mr. Pope he was enabled to start upon the career which must of all others have appealed to him."

The new publisher made an appropriate start on May 17, 1735, at Tully's Head, in Pall Mall—soon to become famous as a favourite haunt of distinguished book-lovers and literary men—with a share in the second volume of Pope's "Works," the other partners being

\* "Robert Dodsley, Poet, Publisher, and Playwright," by Ralph Straus, 1910.

## DODSLEY'S POPULARITY

Gilliver, whose address was at Homer's Head, in Fleet Street, and J. Brindley, of 29 New Bond Street. Pope had at last found a publisher after his own heart. "I beg you," he writes to the elder Duncombe on May 8 of that year, "to accept of the new volume of my things, just printed, which will be delivered you by Mr. Dodsley, the author of the "Toy-Shop," who has just set up as a bookseller; and I doubt not, as he has more sense, so will have more honesty, than most of [that] profession." The bookseller was not ungrateful for Pope's patronage, and sincerely mourned the poet's death in 1744.

Dodsley was not without some of the shop-keeping spirit of the booksellers of his day, and, like the rest of them, he had his occasional disputes with authors, but these were singularly few and far between. His own literary gifts helped to make him popular no doubt, but the reason for his success in literature is not easy to appreciate at the present day. His poems are as dead as his ill-starred literary journal, the "Public Register"; and his contemporary vogue as a playwright is difficult to understand. The real reason for his popularity in the literary world was that he had a "way" with him which almost everybody liked. Perhaps it was because he was never ashamed to admit that he began life as a footman. "You know how decent, humble, inoffensive a creature Dodsley is; how little apt to forget or disguise his having been a footman," writes his friend Horace Walpole to George Montagu on one occasion, when telling him how Dr. John Brown had been ill-mannered enough to reply to one of Dodsley's letters with a card saying, "Footman's language I never return." Brown's mind was none too well balanced, or probably he would never have done such a thing; for the publisher-poet, as Mr. Edmund Gosse says in a letter quoted by Mr. Straus, "was just 'Doddy'—everybody's friend, in love with books and bookish people, a delightful, serviceable, bourgeoisie personality." Lord Chesterfield and Lord Lyttelton, as well as Sir Robert Walpole, were

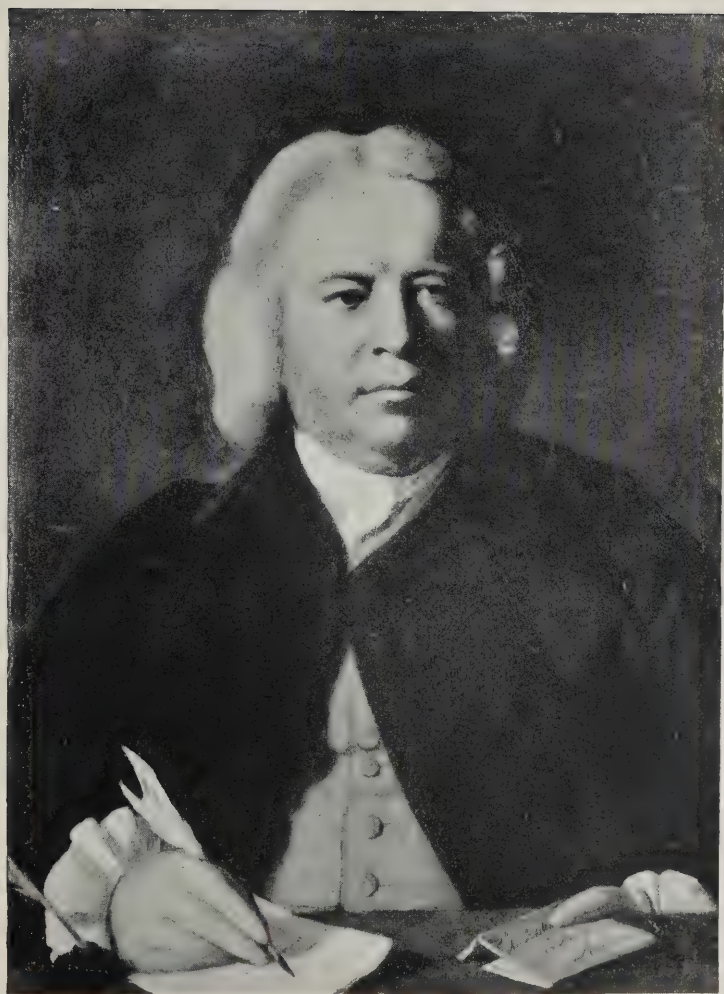


## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

among the bookseller's earliest patrons, and he soon enjoyed the intimate friendship of Joseph Spence, whose long and honourable association with Dodsley began in 1735 with his edition of Buckhurst's "Ancient Tragedy of Gorboduc." Rival booksellers watched the ascent of the rising star with envy and uncharitableness, and Curll could not forbear to show his malice in the following lines, which he addressed to Pope in 1737, when that poet made over to Dodsley the sole right in the publication of his letters :

'Tis kind indeed a Livery Muse to aid,  
Who scribbles farces to augment his trade.  
When you and Spence and Glover drive the nail,  
The Devil's in it if the plot should fail.

To Dodsley belongs the place of honour in the great group of booksellers attracted by that magnetic personality, Samuel Johnson—just as their less scrupulous predecessors revolved round Shakespeare and Ben Jonson a century before, snatching at any chance manuscript that happened to fall their way. Dodsley's shop was already fashionable when Johnson, then practically unknown, went to him on the matter of the anonymous "London," posing only as its author. Later, like many other distinguished men of letters, he was to share in the social gatherings of wit and fashion which Dodsley delighted to encourage at his hospitable 'Tully's Head. "The true Noctes Atticæ are revived at honest Dodsley's house," he afterwards said. But for the moment he was only an outsider, ostensibly acting for an unknown author friend. Himself the son of a bookseller he knew something of the hardships and uncertainties of the trade, and always had a good word to say for it. His early experience was mainly confined to his father's shop at Lichfield, and Warren's at Birmingham, where, after leaving Oxford, and his dreary days as usher at Market Bosworth Grammar School ended, he lodged when staying with his friend Hector. This Warren was



ROBERT DODSLEY

*From the portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds, now  
in the possession of H. Yates Thompson, Esq.*



## DR. JOHNSON'S PENANCE

the first established bookseller in Birmingham. When Michael Johnson started in business at Lichfield, as Boswell tells us, "booksellers' shops in the provincial towns of England were very rare, so that there was not one even in Birmingham, in which town old Mr. Johnson used to open a shop every market-day." Michael Johnson carried his books in the same way to Uttoxeter, and it was here that Dr. Johnson, in his old age, performed his celebrated penance for his youthful pride in refusing to accompany his father to market. The story as told by Boswell will bear repeating :

To Henry White, a young clergyman, with whom he now formed an intimacy, so as to talk with him with great freedom, he mentioned that he could not in general accuse himself of having been an undutiful son. "Once, indeed," said he, "I was disobedient; I refused to attend my father to Uttoxeter market. Pride was the source of that refusal, and the remembrance of it was painful. A few years ago I desired to atone for this fault; I went to Uttoxeter in very bad weather, and stood for a considerable time bare-headed in the rain, on the spot where my father's stall used to stand. In contrition I stood, and I hope the penance was expiatory."

It was for Warren, the Birmingham bookseller, that Johnson's first prose work was written—his translation of Lobo's "Voyage to Abyssinia," for which the bookseller paid him five guineas. The work was published in 1735, with "London" printed on the title-page, though in reality it came from a local press in Birmingham; but this, says Boswell, was "a device too common with provincial publishers." When Johnson moved to London in 1738 he obtained his first regular employment from the publisher Edward Cave, who had founded the "Gentleman's Magazine" seven years previously, and carried it on under the name of "Sylvanus Urban,"\* but it was Dodsley who gave him his first real introduction to the great book world of London. Johnson submitted his "London" to Cave, who forwarded the

\* Cave was subsequently the printer of Johnson's "Rambler."

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

poem to Dodsley, and Johnson, still preserving the pretence of being merely a friend of the author, called anxiously at Tully's Head to know the result. As he told Cave in one of his letters on the subject, the mysterious author was then "under very disadvantageous circumstances of fortune." Then comes the letter to the printer with the joyful news that Dodsley is willing to publish the poem :

I was to-day with Mr. Dodsley, who declares very warmly in favour of the paper you sent him, which he desires to have a share in, it being, as he says, a creditable thing to be concerned in. I knew not what answer to make till I had consulted you, nor what to demand on the author's part, but am very willing that, if you please, he should have a part in it, as he will undoubtedly be more diligent to disperse and promote it. If you can send me word to-morrow what I shall say to him, I will settle matters, and bring the poem with me for the press, which, as the town empties, we cannot be too quick with.

The result was a further meeting between Dodsley and Johnson, at which he gave Johnson ten much-needed guineas. "I might perhaps have accepted less," said the author to Boswell, years afterwards, in relating this incident, "but that Paul Whitehead had a little before got ten guineas for a poem; and I would not take less than Paul Whitehead." Whitehead's poem—his satire, "Manners"—cost its publisher a good deal more than ten guineas before he had done with it, for early in the following year the Lords voted the piece "scandalous," and a libel on several members of the House. In the absence of the author Dodsley was kept in prison for a week, at a cost of £70 in fees, but was then released through the intercession of influential friends, after being brought to the bar of the House, where, upon his knees, he received a final reprimand for his offence from the Lord Chancellor.

An interesting experiment was started about this time, which, though outside the regular course of book-selling, deserves some mention in our narrative. In



## “THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF LEARNING”

1736, the year after Dodsley opened his shop at Tully's Head under such influential patronage, the trade was threatened with another form of competition, and one which promised at first to develop far greater proportions than any that Dodsley could assume. This was an association nominally called “The Society for the Encouragement of Learning,” and aiming, among other things, “to assist authors in the publication, and to secure them the entire profits of their own works.” This highly laudable scheme had for its president the Duke of Richmond, and its Committee of Management included other noblemen and scholars of the highest rank, as well as Paul Whitehead and James Thomson as representatives of professional authorship. It began with a brave flourish of trumpets, a membership of over a hundred, and a secretary, one Alexander Gordon, who is said to have “made a trial of all the ways by which a man could get an honest livelihood”; but whose correspondence, so far as we have seen it, does little credit to his tact. “You have no doubt heard,” he writes to Dr. Richardson, Master of Emmanuel College, Cambridge—whose assistance he sought in order to secure the offer of Dr. Middleton's “Life of Cicero”—“in what a discouraging way Dr. Bentley has used our Society : for, though his work of ‘Manilius’ was ready to be printed, and he desired by several persons to have it published by the Society, he not only raised such ill-grounded objections against the institution itself, but chose to throw it into the hands of a common bookseller, than in those of the Society, which has not only made several gentlemen of letters and high life exclaim against the discouraging and ungenerous act, but will be recorded to the learned world when he is dead and rotten.” It is hardly surprising that the Society did not meet with much encouragement from the “common booksellers,” though a few chosen members of the regular trade were at various times appointed to act for it, and issue such works as fell into its hands. Not meeting

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

with much success by these means the Society appointed its own retail booksellers in different parts of London, allowing them fifteen per cent. on all the Society's publications that they sold ; but its affairs were never flourishing. Even Thomson, though a member of the committee, would not leave his old friend Andrew Millar, who had published his "Seasons" in 1730, not long after opening his shop near St. Clement's Church in the Strand. Millar remained Thomson's publisher until the poet's death in 1748. The Society for the Encouragement of Learning, in spite of all the drawbacks, made a brave and generous struggle against odds for thirteen years, publishing, among other things, Carte's "Original Letters," Roe's "State Papers" and Bishop Tanner's "Notitia Monastica," and "Bibliotheca Britannica." According to Knight, who dwells on the incident with a professional satisfaction which would not be unpardonable were he strictly accurate in his facts, the Society "made an end without publishing any work that had a chance of being profitable either to author or bookseller, and it left to some of its patrons, irresponsible or not, a legacy of two thousand pounds debt." A very different version of the Society's end is given by William Jerdan in a pamphlet published in 1838, and based on the manuscript volumes of the Society's Proceedings, now in the British Museum. From this it appears that the distinguished promoters of the scheme "closed their humane and honoured exertions by balancing the accounts of the association and bestowing the residue of their funds upon that noble charity, the Foundling Hospital. At this time the Duke of Leeds was President, and the sum so congenially appropriated was £24 12s.—the last legacy from the Foundlings of Literature to the hardly more forlorn Foundlings of Benevolence."

Though Johnson's "London"—to return to our history of the book trade proper—proved a great success, it was nine years before Dodsley published anything else of his ; but then it was to be associated with him in

## JOHNSON AND ANDREW MILLAR

the great "Dictionary," which Dodsley appears, indeed, to have been the first to suggest. He was not only one of the "gentlemen partners" in this celebrated enterprise, but also the one with whom alone the lexicographer did not pick a quarrel. "He invariably," writes Mr. Straus, "caused Dodsley to act as intermediary during the many little quarrels and disagreements which arose during the seven years of toil." We all know the story of the mutual satisfaction expressed by Johnson and one of the other partners, Andrew Millar, when the last sheet was at length received from the unpunctual author. "Thank God, I have done with him!" exclaimed Millar, upon whom had fallen the chief responsibility of seeing the work through the press. "I am glad," said Johnson, when this remark was repeated to him, "that he thanks God for anything."

This, however, was not Johnson's final opinion of Millar, who, "though himself no great judge of literature," says Boswell, "had good sense enough to have for his friends very able men to give him their opinions and advice in the purchase of copyright; the consequence of which was his acquiring a very large fortune, with great liberality. Johnson said of him, "I respect Millar, sir; he has raised the price of literature." Next to Dodsley, Millar is the best known publisher of his day. He was Fielding's publisher as well as Thomson's, and, with the histories of Robertson and Hume, played no inconsiderable part in developing the taste for popular historical works which was a leading characteristic of the book world of the mid-eighteenth century. How disappointed was Hume with the reception of the first volume of his History, which was issued at Edinburgh, he has told us in his own words :

I thought that I was the only historian that had at once neglected present power, interest, and authority, and the cry of popular prejudices; and as the subject was suited to every capacity, expected proportional applause. But miserable was my disappointment. I was assailed by one cry of reproach, disapprobation,

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

and even detestation; English, Scotch, and Irish, Whig and Tory, Churchman and Sectary, Freethinker and Religionist, Patriot and Courtier, united in their rage against the man who had presumed to shed a generous tear for the fate of Charles I. and the Earl of Strafford; and after the first ebullitions of their fury were over, what was still more mortifying, the book seemed to sink into oblivion. Mr. Millar told me that in a twelvemonth he sold only forty-five copies of it. I scarcely, indeed, heard of one man in three kingdoms, considerable for rank or letters, that could endure the book. I must only except the primate of England, Dr. Herring, and the primate of Ireland, Dr. Stone, which seem two odd exceptions. These dignified prelates, separately sent me messages "not to be discouraged."

Burton attributes much of the subsequent success of the *History* to the exertions of Mr. Millar. "An arrangement was made, by which he should take the history under his protection—publish the subsequent volumes, and push the sale of the first. The arrangement is said to have been recommended by Hume's Edinburgh publishers; and it shows how much, in that age, as probably also in this, even a good work may depend on the publisher's exertions, for giving it a hold on the public mind. The *History* was concluded in 1761 and Hume now wrote in a very different strain: "Notwithstanding the variety of events and seasons to which my writings had been exposed, they had still been making such advances, that the copy money given me by the booksellers much exceeded anything formerly known in England. I was become not only independent but opulent."

Boswell places Dodsley at the head of the list of booksellers who, for the sum of £1,575,\* contracted with Johnson for the execution of the *Dictionary*. The others are given as "Mr. Charles Hitch [son-in-law and successor of Arthur Bettesworth of Paternoster Row], Mr. Andrew Millar, the two Messieurs Longman, and the two Messieurs Knapton." The great fame which

\* This, by a curious coincidence, was exactly the amount received by the widow of Philip Stanhope for Lord Chesterfield's "Letters to his Son."



## JOHNSON ON BOOKSELLERS

the Dictionary brought him did not improve Johnson's financial position. The whole of the £1,575 was spent before the last page was written, the cost of amanuenses and paper, and other expenses of the kind, running away with no small portion of the sum. Boswell once said to him: "I am sorry, Sir, you did not get more for your Dictionary." His answer was, "I am sorry too. But it was very well. The booksellers are generous, liberal-minded men." Upon all occasions, adds Boswell, "he did ample justice to their character in this respect. He considered them as the patrons of literature; and indeed, although they have eventually been considerable gainers by his 'Dictionary' it is to them that we owe its having been undertaken and carried through at the risk of great expense, for they were not absolutely sure of being indemnified." Though Millar took the principal charge of conducting the publication of the work, Dodsley seems to have been responsible for most of the preliminary arrangements. The Doctor himself in a letter to Dr. Burney, asks him to direct his friends to send their orders to Dodsley "because it was by his recommendation that I was employed in the work." Boswell also tells how he was informed by Dodsley's brother James—then assisting Robert at Tully's Head, where he was presently to be taken into partnership—that several years before the "Plan" was issued, "when Johnson was one day sitting in his brother Robert's shop, he heard his brother suggest to him that a Dictionary of the English Language would be a work that would be well received by the public; that Johnson seemed at first to catch at the proposition, but, after a pause, said, in his abrupt decisive manner, "I believe I shall not undertake it." That he, however, had bestowed much thought upon the subject, before he published his "Plan," is evident from the enlarged, clear, and accurate views which it exhibits; and we find him mentioning in that tract, that many of the writers whose testimonies were to be produced as authorities, were selected by



## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

Pope ; which proves that he had been furnished, probably by Mr. Robert Dodsley, with whatever hints that eminent poet had contributed towards a great literary project, that had been the subject of important consideration in a former reign. It was at Dodsley's desire, too, that the "Plan" was addressed to Lord Chesterfield—with what result we all know. The publisher was afraid that Johnson's famous letter to the Earl, after his belated praise of the Dictionary in Dodsley's own journal, the "World," would cost him that nobleman's patronage ; but his fears were groundless. Dodsley told Dr. Adams that Chesterfield himself had shown him the letter. "I should have imagined," replied Dr. Adams, "that Lord Chesterfield would have concealed it." "Pooh !" said Dodsley, "do you think a letter from Johnson could hurt Lord Chesterfield ? Not at all, Sir. It lay upon his table, where anybody might see it. He read it to me ; said, 'This man has great powers,' pointed out the severest passages, and observed how well they were expressed."

"My good friend Mr. Dodsley," as Lord Chesterfield calls him in one of his papers, continued to receive both his Lordship's patronage and his contributions to his periodical, the total number of his papers in the "World" eventually amounting to twenty-four. Meantime Dodsley had been strengthening his connexion with Johnson by publishing his imitation of the tenth satire of Juvenal, "The Vanity of Human Wishes," and his tragedy "Irene," both in 1749. The poem was none too handsomely paid for, as is proved by the copy of the agreement printed by Boswell :

Nov. 25, 1748. I received of Mr. Dodsley fifteen guineas, for which I assign to him the right of copy of an imitation of the *Tenth Satire of Juvenal*, written by me ; reserving to myself the right of printing one edition.

SAM. JOHNSON.

Johnson made a practice in his agreements with publishers of reserving to himself this right of printing one

## HOW GRAY'S "ELEGY" WAS PUBLISHED

edition, "it being his fixed intention," says Boswell, "to publish at some period, for his own profit, a complete collection of his works." Dodsley was more liberal in regard to "Irene," paying Johnson £100 for it, notwithstanding its failure on the stage at Drury Lane, and its refusal at the hands of other booksellers. Space prevents us from doing justice either to Dodsley's own highly successful tragedy, "Cleone," or such literary work as the authorship of "The Œconomy of Human Life"; and we can only glance at his subsequent career in the bookselling trade—a career bound up with some of the best chapters in our literary history. How he came to publish Gray's "Elegy" is best told in Gray's own letter to Horace Walpole, to whom he had sent a copy of the poem in the summer of 1750, when Walpole incautiously circulated it among his friends :

CAMBRIDGE, February 11, 1751.

As you have brought me into a little sort of distress, you must assist me, I believe, to get out of it as well as I can. Yesterday I had the misfortune of receiving a letter from certain gentlemen (as their bookseller expresses it), who have taken the "Magazine of Magazines" \* into their hands. They tell me that an *ingenious* poem, called "Reflections in a Country Churchyard," has been communicated to them, which they are printing forthwith : that they are informed that the *excellent* author of it is I by name, and that they beg not only his *indulgence*, but the *honour* of his correspondence, etc. As I am not at all disposed to be either so indulgent, or so correspondent, as they desire, I have but one bad way left to escape the honour they would inflict upon me ; and, therefore, am obliged to desire you would make Dodsley print it immediately (which may be done in less than a week's time) from your copy ; but without my name, in what form is most convenient for him ; but on his best paper and character ; he must correct the press himself, and print it without any interval between the stanzas, because the sense is in some places continued beyond them ; and the title must be—"Elegy, written in a Country Churchyard." If he would add a line or two to say it came into his hands by accident, I should like it better. If you

\* A literary journal recently started by a bookseller of small renown, named Owen.

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

behold the "Magazine of Magazines" in the light that I do, you will not refuse to give yourself this trouble on my account, which you have taken of your own accord before now. If Dodsley do not do this immediately, he may as well let it alone.

Dodsley, also through the agency of Walpole, who made him his regular bookseller, had already issued Gray's first published work, "An Ode on a Distant prospect of Eton College." This appeared anonymously in the spring of 1747, but attracted no attention whatever. Walpole must have rushed to Tully's Head with a copy of the "Elegy" as soon as he received Gray's reproachful letter, for although this did not leave Cambridge until February 11, the poem itself was published anonymously as a quarto pamphlet on the 15th. Even so, they only beat the rival bookseller by twenty-four hours, the poem appearing in the "Magazine of Magazines" on the 16th. The "Elegy" leaped into immediate fame, running through four authorised editions in two months, apart from numerous pirated editions. "The success of the poem, however," as Mr. Edmund Gosse says in his life of Gray, "brought him little direct satisfaction, and no money. He gave the right of publication to Dodsley, as he did in all other instances. He held a Quixotic notion that it was beneath a gentleman to take money for his inventions from a bookseller, a view in which Dodsley naturally coincided"; and he adds that after the poet's death it was stated by another bookseller that Dodsley was known to have made nearly a thousand pounds by his poetry. Gray lowered his exalted ideals when he walked into Dodsley's shop in June 1757 with his two later poems, "The Bard," and "The Progress of Poetry," and parted with the copyright of both for forty guineas. These were the two poems with which Walpole started his private press at Strawberry Hill. "On Monday next," writes the enthusiastic Walpole to Chute in July of this year, "the *Officina Arbuteana* opens in form. The Stationers' Company, that is, Mr. Dodsley, Mr. Tonson, &c., are summoned to meet

## STERNE'S NEGOTIATIONS WITH DODSLEY

here on Sunday night. And with what do you think we open? *Cedite, Romani Impressores*—with nothing under *Graii Carmina*. I found him in town last week: he had brought his two Odes to be printed. I snatched them out of Dodsley's hands, and they are to be the first-fruits of my press."

The first-fruits were a long time in the making, and Gray at least began to lose patience with Walpole's new plaything, but copies were at length safely delivered in quarto pamphlet size, and issued on August 8 at a shilling each. In the following year Walpole printed at the same press his "Catalogue of Royal and Noble Authors," though it was Dodsley who brought out the second edition in 1759. Earlier in the same year, while making his preparations to retire from the business in which he was to be succeeded by his brother James, Robert Dodsley entered into negotiations with Laurence Sterne for the publication of "Tristram Shandy." Probably through an old apprentice, John Hinxman, who had taken over the bookselling business of H. Hildyard, of Stonegate, York, Sterne wrote to Robert Dodsley offering "Tristram" for fifty pounds. The substance of Robert's reply may be gathered from Sterne's second letter, which is interesting enough to give in full. Our text is from Mr. Straus's "Life of Dodsley":

SIR,

What you wrote to me in June last, in answer to my demand of £50 for the Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy—that it was too much to risk on a single volume, which, if it happened not to sell, would be hard upon your brother—I think a most reasonable objection in him, against giving me the price I thought my work deserved. You need not to be told by me, how much authors are inclined to overrate their own productions—for my own part, I hope I am an exception, for, if I could find out, by any arcanum, the precise value of mine, I declare Mr. James Dodsley should have it 20 per cent., below its value. I propose, therefore, to print a lean edition, in two small volumes of the size of *Rasselas*, and on the same type and paper, at my own expense, merely to feel the pulse of the world, and that I may



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know what price to set on the remaining volumes from the reception of these. If my book sells, and has the run our critics expect, I propose to free myself of all future troubles of the kind, and bargain with you, if possible for the rest as they come out, which will be every six months. If my book fails of success, the loss falls where it ought to do. The same motives which inclined me first to offer you this trifle, incline me to give you the whole profits of the sale (except what Mr. Hinxman sells here, which will be a great many) and to have them sold only at your shop upon the usual terms in these cases. The book shall be printed here, and the impression sent up to you; for as I live at York, and shall correct every proof myself, it shall go perfect into the world, and be printed in so creditable a way, as to paper, type, etc., as to do no dishonour to you, who, I know, never choose to print a book meanly. Will you patronize my book upon these terms, and be as kind a friend to it as if you had bought the copyright? Be so good as to favour me with a line by the return; and believe me,

Sir, Your most obliged and most humble servant,

L. STERNE.

P.S. All locality is taken out of the book; the satire general; notes are added, where wanted, and the whole made more saleable; about a hundred and fifty pages added; and, to conclude, a strong interest formed and forming in its behalf, which I hope, will soon take off the few I shall print in this *coup d'essai*. I had desired Mr. Hinxman to write the purport of this to you by this post; but lest he should omit it, or not sufficiently explain my intention, I thought it best to trouble you with a letter myself. Direct for me Prebendary of York.

What followed, as Mr. Straus says, is obscure, but it is probable that Dodsley advised his brother to come to terms with Sterne. What these terms were—if, indeed, any terms were made—it is impossible to say, but the work appeared on the first day of the new year, and was duly announced in the “Publick Advertiser” of that date, to the following effect: “This day is published, printed on superfine writing paper, and a new letter, in two volumes, price 5s., neatly bound, ‘The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman. York.’ Printed for and sold by John Hinxman (successor



## DODSLEY'S FINE RECORD

to the late Mr. Hildyard), Bookseller in Stonegate; J. Dodsley, in Pall Mall; and Mr. Cooper, in Paternoster Row, London, and by all the Booksellers in Great Britain and Ireland." How "Tristram" took both London and York by storm is well known; and what that success meant to its author is most eloquently shown in the fact that for the new editions of the book, and his two volumes of sermons, James Dodsley was now ready to pay him no less a sum than £480.

Robert Dodsley retired in 1759 with a record of which he had every reason to be proud. Apart from the books already mentioned and a host of others too numerous to mention, he published the works of Shenstone, whose close friend and biographer he became; "The Pleasures of Imagination" and other poems of Mark Akenside, who also edited the "Museum," Swift's "Directions to Servants," as well as a number of the Dean's minor writings; the first three works of Edmund Burke, besides starting with him the historic "Annual Register"—a journal which was described by Prior at the time as "the best and most comprehensive of all the periodical works," and still exists; the first six parts of Young's "Night Thoughts," for the copyright of which he paid 220 guineas; Goldsmith's "Inquiry into the State of Polite Learning," which rescued the author from the clutches of Griffiths, whose hack he had been; and, as a fitting close to his reign at Tully's Head, the first edition of Johnson's most popular work, "Rasselas," written, according to the story told to Boswell by Strahan the printer, in order that Johnson, with the profits, "might defray the expense of his mother's funeral, and pay some little debts which she had left. He told Sir Joshua Reynolds, that he composed it in the evenings of one week, sent it to the press in portions as it was written, and had never since read it over. Mr. Strahan, Mr. Johnston, and Mr. Dodsley purchased it for a hundred pounds, but afterwards paid him twenty-five pounds more, when it came to a second edition." The work

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

was published on April 19, 1759, and went to a second edition in the following June.

Dodsley has other claims to remembrance apart from his own writings and his fine record as a publisher. His twelve volumes of "Old Plays," and his three volumes of "Poems by Several Hands"—all compiled and edited by himself—remain a permanent memorial of his services to letters, and will preserve his name long after his other claims have been forgotten.

Let us glance at the booksellers—the more important of them at all events—as they might have been found in the early sixties of the eighteenth century, about the time of old Robert Dodsley's death. London was still the only bookselling centre worth visiting in Britain. There were more booksellers in Birmingham then in Dr. Johnson's early days, among them William Hutton, who had established the first circulating library there in 1751,\* but was now more intent on his paper warehouse, from which, as he tells us, he acquired an ample fortune. He is remembered to-day as the author of a number of useful topographical works, and as a friend of Priestley who suffered heavily in the Church and King riots of 1791. York, which had been one of the earliest cities to encourage the printing-press in England, was not much better off than Birmingham at the particular period we have in mind. John Hinxman, as we have seen, had succeeded Hildyard there in 1757, and published the first edition of "Tristram Shandy" in 1760, but he soon returned to London, taking over the very considerable publishing business of Mrs. Mary Cooper, relict of Thomas Cooper, at the Globe, in Paternoster Row. York's best known printer was Thomas Gent, who, like William Hutton, was a topographer as well, with a similar fondness for relieving his pent-up feelings in occasional verse.

\* To whom belongs the honour of founding the first circulating library is a vexed question; but Hull is said to have boasted one on modern lines in 1650, and Allan Ramsay had another in Edinburgh as early as 1725. London does not appear to have possessed anything of the sort until 1740.

## SOME PROVINCIAL BOOKSELLERS

His autobiography, which was not discovered until long after his death, is useful for its information relating to the state of the press in his own lifetime, though, like the record of Samuel Richardson's business, in which Gent was at one time employed, it belongs more to the story of printing than to that of bookselling proper.

Liverpool, if it had no conspicuous publishers, had just come into possession of a circulating library, the Lyceum, which has not only lived to celebrate its 150th anniversary, but remains one of the best institutions of its kind in the kingdom. Newcastle, always a book-loving centre, already had its own Stationers' Company, with the Tyne "Brigg" as its headquarters, so to speak. Among the worthies of the local trade was Martin Bryson,\* a friend of the Edinburgh poet and bookseller, Allan Ramsay, who once sent him a letter addressed in rhyme as follows :

To Martin Bryson, on Tyne Brigg,  
An upright, downright, honest Whig.

Leicester had not yet become associated with the early speculations of Sir Richard Phillips, who was not born, indeed, until three years after Robert Dodsley's death. Like other members of the craft who have stepped across these pages Sir Richard combined the sale of patent medicines with that of books and stationery when he abandoned the hosiery business for literature in 1790.

He fell under the revolutionary influences of his time, and not long after starting the "Leicester Herald" in 1792 he was sentenced to eighteen months' imprisonment for selling Paine's "Rights of Man." But Dr. Priestley helped him, and he succeeded in editing the "Herald" from Leicester gaol, afterwards starting a magazine which he called the "Museum." Then came a ruinous fire,

\* One of Bryson's apprentices was William Charnley, who succeeded him in the business, after starting a circulating library on his own account in 1755. Charnley lived until 1803, when he was succeeded by his son Emerson, described by Dibdin as "the veteran Emperor of Northumbrian booksellers."

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

which not only put a stop to both these journals, but ended the publisher's career so far as Leicester was concerned. Fortune favoured him, however, when he came to London and opened a shop in St. Paul's Churchyard, where he started the "Monthly Magazine" in 1796, and made a small, but only temporary, fortune by the sale of cheap educational books and the kind of popular literature on which were built the later houses of Chambers and Cassell. Apparently he outlived his republican views, for in 1807, when serving as a Sheriff of London, he consented to act as the bearer of an address from the corporation to George III., from whom he then received his knighthood. Sir Richard is remembered to-day more for his eccentricities than for his services as a pioneer of cheap literature. His vegetarianism—imagine a vegetarian as a member of the City Corporation!—brought down upon his head the ridicule of Tom Moore, who scoffed at his "Pythagorean diet," and furnished Borrow with his character of the vegetarian publisher in "Lavengro."

Dublin had no lack of printers and booksellers in the last half of the eighteenth century, but they were a notorious set of scamps, taking full advantage of the fact that Ireland remained out of the jurisdiction of the Act of 1709. Richardson's grievance, which he printed in 1753, under the title, "The Case of Samuel Richardson, of London, Printer, on the Invasion of his Property in the 'History of Sir Charles Grandison,' before publication, by certain Booksellers of Dublin," was that of many another author of his age. He explains that he had planned to send to Dublin the volumes of "Grandison," as in the case of "Clarissa Harlowe," to have them printed there before they were issued in London. But the pirates surreptitiously anticipated him. "The sheets were stolen from his warehouse, and three Irish booksellers each published cheap editions of nearly half the book before a volume appeared in England. Richardson had heard an Irish bookseller boast that he could procure, from any printing-office in London, sheets of any book

## DUBLIN, GLASGOW, AND EDINBURGH

while it was being printed there. 'At present,' he writes in conclusion, 'the English writers may be said, from the attempts and practices of the Irish booksellers and printers, to live in an age of *liberty*, but not of *propriety*.' The 'Gray's Inn Journal,' in referring to his case, observed that 'a greater degree of probity might be expected from booksellers on account of their occupation in life, and connections with the learned. What, then, should be said of Messrs. Exshaw, Wilson, and Saunders, booksellers in Dublin, and perpetrators of this vile act of piracy ?'

Glasgow was perhaps the most striking exception to the rule that the best work in the book trade at this period was being done in London. The Foulis Press at Glasgow—founded in 1741 by Robert Foulis, with whom was associated his brother Andrew as partner—issued some of the finest books ever printed. "The works produced by it," says Professor Ferguson,\* "are quite entitled to rank with the Aldines, Elzevirs, Bondonis, Baskervilles, which are all justly renowned for the varied excellences they possess, but no provincial, and certainly no metropolitan, press in the country has ever surpassed that of the two brothers." They became printers to the University of Glasgow, and confined their publications mainly to editions of the classics—notably the celebrated "immaculate" Horace—and reprints of standard works in English. But they devoted too much of their attention and capital to their luckless scheme for a sort of Scottish Academy of Arts, and when, after their death, their affairs were finally wound up in 1781, their debts were found to amount to over £6,500.

Edinburgh, at the same period, had not specially distinguished herself in bookselling annals. Her great days under Constable were still to come, her most interesting bookseller up to this time, Allan Ramsay, the poet, having retired from business in 1755, and died three years later. Alexander Donaldson, who began in Edinburgh, had

\* In the "Library" for March 1889.



## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

opened his shop in London, where, as will presently be seen, he conducted a campaign against the Londoners which had far-reaching consequences. Other booksellers, like Thomas Miller, of Bungay, who, in 1755, as recorded by Dibdin, "set himself up in the character of grocer and bookseller," were springing up all over England, keeping pace with the gradual increase in the reading public, and being supplied by the wholesale dealers who had now become a recognised branch of the business ; but few other provincial worthies have left their names in the records of the trade.

We must return to London for our glimpse of the real book world of England. The Strand was a great highway of letters right through the eighteenth century. Has not Pope placed the race-course for the stationers in the centre of that thoroughfare ; and is not Andrew Millar at this moment installed in old Jacob Tonson's house at the Shakespeare Head, opposite to Catherine Street, honouring a brother Scot by changing the name to Buchanan's Head ? Jacob Tonson III., who deserves to be remembered for never having learned "to consider the author as the under-agent to the bookseller"—to quote Steevens's eulogy in the advertisement prefixed to his edition of Shakespeare—had left the old address for another house on the opposite side of the Strand, where he died in 1767, leaving no one of his name to succeed him. It was Jacob Tonson III. who, in 1765, with a number of other booksellers, published Johnson's long-delayed edition of "Shakespeare," and after his death was referred to by the Doctor as "the late amiable Mr. Tonson." And not without reason, for the publisher who had all the troublesome dealings with Johnson in connexion with the new edition of Shakespeare, seems also to have proved a real friend in need when, in February 1758, nearly two years after signing the agreement for the book, his editor was arrested for a debt of £40. The facts are given by Mr. H. B. Wheatley in the "Athenæum" for September 11, 1909, in which he

## A GIBE AT DR. JOHNSON

prints, for the first time, a number of interesting documents relating to this edition, now in the possession of Mr. F. H. Rivington. From these documents it appears that Johnson, all told, must have received upwards of £1,300 for his "Shakespeare," which is nearly three times as much as it was hitherto supposed to have brought him. The work was published by subscription, Johnson issuing his proposals in 1756, and promising the work before Christmas of the following year. Yet nine years elapsed before it was ready, and Johnson admitted that he "lost all the names and spent all the money" before it was finished. Hence Churchill's scathing lines in the "Ghost" (1763) :

He for subscribers baits his hook,  
And takes your cash ; but where's the book ?  
No matter where ; wise fear, you know,  
Forbids the robbing of a foe ;  
But what, to serve our private ends,  
Forbids the cheating of our friends—

lines which, Boswell suggests, made Johnson's friends urge him to dispatch. Like the third Jacob Tonson, Henry Lintot, old Bernard Lintot's only son, died (in 1758) without leaving a successor, and also without adding much to his father's laurels as a publisher. James Dodsley continued the business left by his greater brother Robert, but appears to have closed the ordinary bookselling department, developing more on the lines of a publishing house of the present day ; keeping a carriage, too, but dreadfully afraid all the time that any of his friends should hear of it. Boswell once remarked to Johnson that Robert Dodsley, having raised himself so successfully from the station of a footman, deserved a biography. "I doubt whether Dodsley's brother would thank a man who should write his life," returned Johnson, "yet Dodsley himself was not unwilling that his original low condition should be recollected."

It was James Dodsley who was first approached by Chatterton, before the "marvellous boy" made his

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

unsuccessful bid for the patronage of Walpole. "I take this opportunity to acquaint you that I can procure copys of several Ancient Poems," he writes from Bristol to Tully's Head on December 21, 1768. Among them, he says, is "an interlude, perhaps the oldest dramatic piece extant; wrote by one Rowley, a Priest in Bristol, who lived in the reign of Henry VI. and Edward IV." If these pieces were likely to be of service to the publishers copies would be sent at his command by his "most obedient servant De Be." The answer was to be directed "for D.B. to be left with Mr. Tho. Chatterton, Redclift Hill, Bristol."

It has been assumed that no reply was sent, from the fact that nothing of the sort has been traced, but Mr. Ingram,\* in the new study of the poet from original documents, makes it fairly obvious that some correspondence did take place. The later letter to Dodsley, in which Chatterton described the finding of his masterpiece, the tragedy of "*Ælla*," and regretted that he had not the guinea which the owner demanded for a copy of the manuscript, seems clearly to prove that some intervening communications must have passed between the two. "If it should not suit you," adds Chatterton, in his own grand manner, "I should be obliged to you if you would calculate the expenses of printing it, as I will endeavour to publish it by subscription on my own account." Chatterton, remember, was then little more than sixteen; the tragedy itself, as now printed, contains over twelve hundred lines. What happened is not clear, though the result of the subsequent appeal to Walpole is but too well known. Chatterton called on Dodsley soon after his arrival in London, and it must have been there that he first realised how hard was the struggle which he had set himself to face. The rest of the brief tragic story—perhaps the saddest in the whole course of our literary history—is familiar to every one. It was unfortunate for Chatterton that the publisher to whom he applied was

\* "The True Chatterton," by John H. Ingram, 1910.

## CHATTERTON AND RICHARDSON

not Robert Dodsley—though some of his biographers evidently assume that it was—instead of his brother James, for Robert himself had the literary instinct, and might have sent Chatterton away as joyfully as Johnson, after that more fortunate interview in the matter of the poem “London,” when author and publisher alike were in their own early careers.

How different might then have been this melancholy chapter in our story !

Gray’s Inn at this time still had its bookseller in Thomas Osborne, an ignorant but enterprising man, who was not only pilloried by Pope in the later edition of the “Dunciad,”\* but personally chastised by Johnson. He is more honourably remembered for his share in 1740 in persuading his brother stationer, Samuel Richardson, to undertake something more ambitious in literature than the indexes and dedications which had hitherto contented him. Richardson himself relates how this came about in a letter to Aaron Hill :

Two booksellers, my particular friends, Thomas Osborne and Charles Rivington entreated me to write for them a little volume of Letters, in a common style, on such subjects as might be of use to those country readers who were unable to indite for themselves. “Will it be any harm,” said I, “in a piece you want to be written so low, if we should instruct them how they should think and act in common cases, as well as indite ?” They were the more urgent with me to begin the little volume for this hint. I set about it ; and, in the progress of it, wrote two or three letters to instruct handsome girls who were obliged to go out to service, as we phrase it, how to avoid the snares that might be laid against their virtue. And hence sprung “Pamela.”

“Pamela” was issued from Osborne’s shop in Gray’s Inn Gateway in 1741 and ran through five editions within

\* Osborne earned this distinction, according to William Roscoe, in a footnote to his edition of the “Dunciad,” for publishing advertisements pretending to sell Mr. Pope’s subscription edition of Homer’s “Iliad” at half the price ; “of which books he had none, but cut to the size of them (which was quarto) the common books in folio, without copper-plates, on a worse paper, and never above half the value.”

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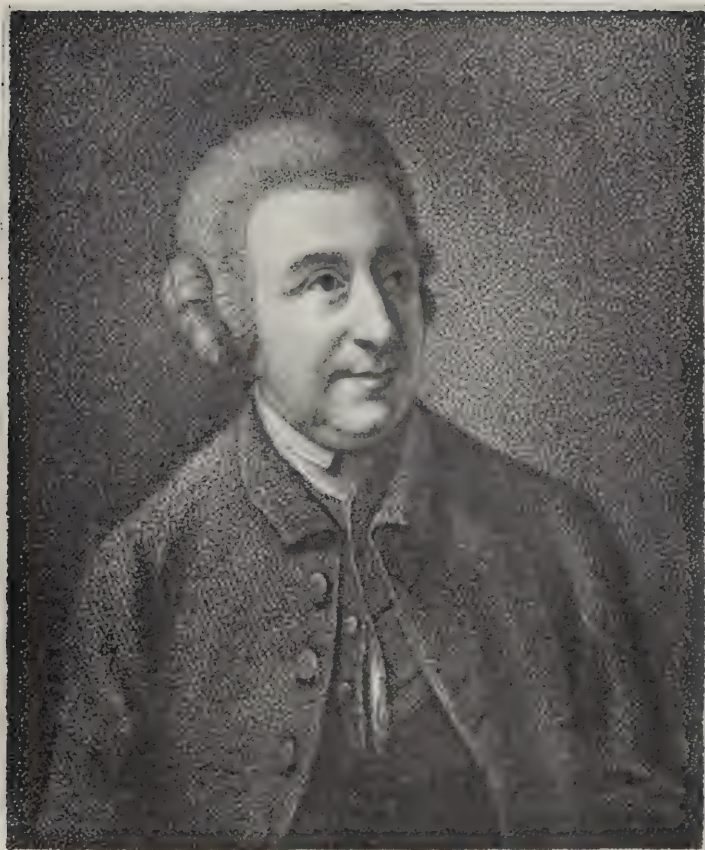
the first twelve months. It was in the following year that Johnson undertook to catalogue the Harleian Library, which Osborne had bought for £13,000—not more, according to William Oldys, than the mere cost of the binding of the books. “It has been confidently related, with many embellishments,” says Boswell, “that Johnson one day knocked Osborne down in his shop, with a folio, and put his foot upon his neck. The simple truth I had from Johnson himself. ‘Sir, he was impertinent to me and I beat him. But it was not in his shop: it was in my own chamber.’” The story reminds us of the scuffle between Oliver Goldsmith and Thomas Evans,\* the bookseller who, in 1773, published a letter in his “London Packet” reflecting on Goldsmith and Miss Horneck; and of the earlier scene between David Hume and the Fleet Street bookseller who published the review called the “History of the Works of the Learned,” which had ventured to criticise his anonymous “Treatise of Human Nature.” This was a circumstance, according to Burton’s “Life of Hume,” “which so highly provoked our young philosopher, that he flew in a violent rage to demand satisfaction of Jacob Robinson, the publisher, whom he kept at bay, during the paroxysm of his anger, at his sword’s point, trembling behind the counter, lest a period should be put to the life of a sober critic by a raving philosopher.” Obviously, as his biographer suggests, the author had not yet acquired the command over his passions of which he afterwards made a boast.

Johnson’s treatment of Osborne did not in the least affect his high regard for booksellers in general. He is nowhere seen to better advantage than in his dealings with “our poor friend Mr. Thomas Davies,” as Boswell calls him—the actor turned bookseller,† who in the back

\* Not to be confused with another Thomas Evans, the scholarly bookseller of Pall Mall, who first collected Goldsmith’s writings, and himself edited Shakespeare’s “Poems,” Prior’s “Works,” and a volume of “Old Ballads” on the lines of Percy’s “Reliques.”

† It is said that Tom Davies was driven from the stage by Churchill’s sneer in the “Rosciad”—“He mouths a sentence as curs mouth a bone.”





THOMAS DAVIES

*From an engraving by Schiavonetti after a drawing by Hickey*



## WHERE BOSWELL FIRST MET JOHNSON

parlour of his little shop in Russell Street, Covent Garden, on that memorable Monday, May 16, 1763, first introduced Boswell to the "extraordinary man" of whom he had heard so much :

At last, on Monday the 16th of May, when I was sitting in Mr. Davies's back-parlour, after having drunk tea with him and Mrs. Davies, Johnson unexpectedly came into the shop, and Mr. Davies having perceived him through the glass-door in the room in which we were sitting, advancing towards us,—he announced his awful approach to me, somewhat in the manner of an actor in the part of Horatio, when he addresses Hamlet on the appearance of his father's ghost, "Look, my lord, it comes." I found that I had a very perfect idea of Johnson's figure, from the portrait of him painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds soon after he had published his Dictionary, in the attitude of sitting in his easy chair in deep meditation ; which was the first picture his friend did for him, which Sir Joshua very kindly presented to me. Mr. Davies mentioned my name, and respectfully introduced me to him. I was much agitated ; and recollecting his prejudice against the Scotch, of which I had heard much, I said to Davies, "Don't tell where I come from." "From Scotland," cried Davies, roguishly. "Mr. Johnson," said I, "I do indeed come from Scotland, but I cannot help it." I am willing to flatter myself that I meant this as light pleasantry to soothe and conciliate him, and not as a humiliating abasement at the expense of my country. But however that might be, this speech was somewhat unlucky ; for with that quickness of wit for which he was so remarkable, he seized the expression "come from Scotland," which I used in the sense of being of that country ; and, as if I had said that I had come away from it, or left it, retorted, "That, Sir, I find, is what a very great many of your countrymen cannot help." This stroke stunned me a good deal ; and when we had sat down, I felt myself not a little embarrassed and apprehensive of what might come next.

Poor Bozzy was snubbed worse than that before the interview was over, but he counted himself well rewarded by the conversation which the great man condescended to utter in his presence. Later we find them dining together at Tom Davies's house, and it was the same publisher who, with Strahan and Cadell, waited upon Johnson on behalf of the Chapter House in 1777 to solicit

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

the "Lives of the Poets." Four years before this Davies had risked his friendship by publishing a pirated edition of Johnson's "Miscellaneous and Fugitive Pieces" in two volumes, but the Doctor took pity on his needy circumstances, and forgave him. "Sir," he said to Boswell on one occasion, "Davies has learning enough to give credit to a clergyman"; but his learning did not prevent him in 1778 from becoming bankrupt. It was Johnson who used his influence then to help him out of his difficulties, and touching memorials of his sincere regard for his old bookselling friend are preserved by his biographer in two letters written by the Doctor when stricken with illness in the last years of his life.

Nor must we forget those dinner parties at "my worthy booksellers and friends, Messieurs Dilly, in the Poultry, at whose hospitable and well-covered table," remarks Boswell, "I have seen a greater number of literary men than at any other, except that of Sir Joshua Reynolds." It was here that Bozzy so artfully negotiated the meeting between Johnson and Wilkes in 1776; and it was Charles Dilly—at one time in partnership with his brother Edward—who not only published Boswell's "Tour in the Hebrides" (1780) but the "Life of Johnson" (1791).

We are wandering, however, from our general view of the book trade as it existed in London within a few years of Robert Dodsley's death. Little Britain still had a few old booksellers left, but its glory had departed. Edward Ballard, the last of the race, had not long succeeded his father (who died in 1761) and he carried on his quiet business in educational works and books of divinity until his own death in 1796. Among the men who helped to make the neighbourhood of the Strand a favourite haunt of booklovers was "Honest Tom Payne," whose annual catalogue of literature, old and new, English and foreign, brought him customers from all parts of the kingdom. His shop was at the Mews-Gate, so named from the Royal Mews, which stood on the site of the present

## BOOKSELLING QUARTERS IN LONDON

National Gallery. Here, in 1777, he published the first edition of the "Rowley Poems"—seven years after Chatterton's tragic death.\* "His little shop," says Knight, "acquired the name of a Literary Coffee House; for there, rummaging over his shelves, or glancing at the books upon his counters, were to be found a succession of scholars always eager to purchase at the very moderate prices at which 'honest Tom Payne' marked his books." † Thomas Mathias, in his "Pursuits of Literature," describes him as "that *Trypho emeritus*, Mr. Thomas Payne, one of the honestest men living, to whom, as a bookseller, learning is under considerable obligations." † Pall Mall already had other booksellers, besides the Dodsleys. Thomas Becket settled there after leaving Andrew Millar's shop to become a partner in the firm of Becket and De Hondt, who, succeeding James Dodsley as Sterne's publishers, issued the fifth and six volumes of "Tristram Shandy" at the end of 1761, and not only completed the work, but published the same author's further volumes of Sermons in 1767—with a subscription list which included the names of Voltaire, Diderot, and Hume, and brought him £300 in addition to copyright money—and the "Sentimental Journey," which appeared in February 1768, less than three weeks before poor Yorick's melancholy end.

While the Strand and farther West were thus taking their place in the great book world of London, Fleet Street and the neighbourhood of St. Paul's still held their own, though the Churchyard itself had long since lost its old importance. Paternoster Row, standing in the shadow of St. Paul's and the new Stationers' Hall, made amends for the Churchyard's loss by steadily

\* All Chatterton's literary work printed during his lifetime appeared in the periodicals. The first of his pieces to be published separately was "The Execution of Sir Charles Bawdin," issued by W. Goldsmith, of 20 Paternoster Row, in 1772, two years after the poet's death.

† Thomas Payne the younger succeeded to his father's business in 1790, transferring it to more pretentious quarters in Pall Mall in 1806, and retiring in 1825.



## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

increasing its influence with the growth of such firms as the Rivingtons and Longmans. A stone's-throw away at the sign of the Bible and Sun dwelt "the philanthropic publisher of St. Paul's Churchyard," as Goldsmith in "The Vicar of Wakefield" calls John Newbery, the good-natured, pimple-faced bookseller, who combined the sale of literature with that of Dr. James's celebrated Fever Powder, and other patent medicines. Newbery was practically the first publisher to discover that the time had come to furnish children with a special library and a light literature of their own. It was not until the eighteenth century that Englishmen began to study the needs of children in this respect. The horn-books, with their prayers and their alphabets, and the chap books which the pedlars carried about from village to village as far back as the sixteenth century, were not exactly of a kind to make the young Elizabethan, for example, dance for joy. Newbery understood children better. "Little Goody Two Shoes," "Giles Gingerbread," "Tommy Trip and his Dog Jowler," and other of his "Nursery Classics," as Charles Lamb calls them, all owed their origin to him, if he did not write them himself. His inexhaustible energy—playfully caricatured by Johnson under the character of "Jack Whirler" in the "Idler"—led him into many undertakings in practically every branch of literary and newspaper enterprise, but his fame rests chiefly in his books for children and his connexion with Oliver Goldsmith. This connexion began after Dodsley had published the "Inquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning" in 1759, which, as already stated, marked the end of Goldsmith's miseries at the hands of the grinding bookseller, Ralph Griffiths, the story of which may here be introduced. Griffiths, in the first place, had given him hack work on the "Monthly Review," providing him with board and lodging in return over his shop in Paternoster Row. Escaping thence, poor Goldsmith found other rooms elsewhere, though still in the pay of Griffiths, who lent him, or became

## GRIFFITHS' TREATMENT OF GOLDSMITH

security for, a small sum of money in order that Goldsmith could buy a suit of clothes for his examination at Surgeons' Hall. He promised to return the money in the shape of book reviews. As luck would have it, his landlord was just then thrown into prison, and the good-natured Goldsmith must needs pawn the suit in order to secure his release, at the same time leaving the books which he had reviewed for Griffiths as security for a trifling loan advanced by a neighbour to relieve his own immediate wants. Unfortunately the parsimonious publisher happened to see the suit of clothes at the pawnbroker's, and denouncing Goldsmith as a knave and sharper, threatened to send him to prison. Here is Goldsmith's reply :

SIR,—

*January 1759.*

I know of no misery but a jail to which my own imprudences and your letter seem to point. I have seen it inevitable these three or four weeks, and, by heavens! request it as a favour—as a favour that may prevent something more fatal. I have been some years struggling with a wretched being—with all that contempt and indigence bring with it—with all those passions which make contempt insupportable. What, then, has a jail that is formidable? I shall at least have the society of wretches, and such is to me true society. I tell you, again and again, that I am neither able nor willing to pay you a farthing, but I will be punctual to any appointment you or the tailor shall make; thus far, at least, I do not act the sharper, since, unable to pay my own debts one way, I would generally give some security another. No, Sir; had I been a sharper—had I been possessed of less good nature and native generosity, I might surely now have been in better circumstances.

I am guilty, I own, of meannesses which poverty unavoidably brings with it: my reflections are filled with repentance for my imprudence, but not with any remorse for being a villain; that may be a character you unjustly charge me with. Your books, I can assure you, are neither pawned nor sold, but in the custody of a friend, from whom my necessities obliged me to borrow some money: whatever becomes of my person, you shall have them in a month. It is very possible both the reports you have heard, and your own suggestions, may have brought you false information with respect to my character; it is very possible that the man

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

whom you now regard with detestation may inwardly burn with grateful resentment. It is very possible that, upon a second perusal of the letter I sent you, you may see the workings of a mind strongly agitated with gratitude and jealousy. If such circumstances should appear, at least spare invective till my book with Mr. Dodsley shall be published, and then, perhaps, you may see the bright side of a mind, when my professions shall not appear the dictates of necessity, but of choice.

You seem to think Dr. Milner knew me not. Perhaps so ; but he was a man I shall ever honour ; but I have friendships only with the dead ! I ask pardon for taking up so much time ; nor shall I add to it by any other professions than that I am, sir, your humble servant,

OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

P.S.—I shall expect impatiently the result of your resolutions.

Griffiths had several months to wait for the "Inquiry into the State of Polite Learning," the book which Dodsley had in preparation, and then took the author's attack on his craft as a personal offence. Though the quarrel was patched up Griffiths never forgave him. In 1760 Goldsmith's "Citizen of the World" ran through John Newbery's "Public Ledger" as the "Chinese Letters," and was republished by him in two volumes, anonymously, in the following year. For this the author was paid five guineas ; for "The Life of Richard Nash" fourteen guineas ; for "The Traveller," the first of Goldsmith's books to bear his name, twenty guineas ; and for his anonymous "History of England," £21. "Newbery," says Washington Irving, "was a worthy, intelligent, kind-hearted man, and a reasonable, though cautious, friend to authors, relieving them with small loans when in pecuniary difficulties, though always taking care to be well repaid by the labour of their pains." During the period between the publication of the "Citizen of the World" and the year of his death (1667) Newbery lived in apartments at Canonbury House, Islington, where, in the upper story, he also provided a temporary home for Goldsmith, paying quarterly for his board and lodging, and getting his author to square the account in the

## “THE VICAR OF WAKEFIELD”

shape of “copy”—“Goody Two Shoes,” perhaps, and other things. How long Goldsmith remained at Canonbury House, and how much of “The Vicar of Wakefield” was written there, it is impossible to say. As Mr. Charles Welsh remarks in his life of Newbery,\* “there are probably few points of literary history of the last century more obscure and involved than the story of the writing, and the sale of the copyright, of this book.” Johnson’s own picturesque story is the best known :

I received one morning a message from poor Goldsmith that he was in great distress, and as it was not in his power to come to me, begging that I would come to him as soon as possible. I sent him a guinea, and promised to come to him directly. I accordingly went as soon as I was drest, and found that his landlady had arrested him for his rent, at which he was in a violent passion. I perceived that he had already changed my guinea, and had got a bottle of Madeira and a glass before him. I put the cork into the bottle, desired he would be calm, and began to talk to him of the means by which he might be extricated. He then told me that he had a novel ready for the press, which he produced to me. I looked into it, and saw its merit ; told the landlady I should soon return, and having gone to a bookseller, sold it for sixty pounds. I brought Goldsmith the money, and he discharged his rent, not without rating his landlady in a high tone for having used him so ill.

Whoever the landlady was, and whether John Newbery was at the back of his arrest or not, the fact remains that it was first published in 1766 in the name of “Honest John’s” nephew, Francis Newbery, who, apparently with his uncle’s assistance, had been set up in business at the Crown, in Paternoster Row. It seems probable that the elder Newbery had a common interest in the “Vicar” ; but if that were so he did not live to see any returns for his investment. His biographer shows that it was not until after the fourth edition had been sold—eight years after the first—that the publisher received

\* “A Bookseller of the Last Century,” published by Griffith, Farran, Okeden and Welsh, successors to Newbery and Harris, at the sign of the Bible and Sun, West Corner of St. Paul’s Churchyard, 1885.



## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

any profit from the work. Family disputes broke up the house of Newbery after the founder's death. His nephew opened a new shop at No. 20 Ludgate Street, while his son, also named Francis, summoned from Oxford on his father's death, carried on the business at the old address in partnership with his step-brother, Thomas Carnan. The petty rivalry which ensued may be sufficiently judged by the following announcement in an edition of the "New History of England" (1772) facing a dedication "To the young Gentlemen and Ladies of Great Britain and Ireland":

The Public are desired to observe that F. Newbery, at the corner of St. Paul's Church Yard and Ludgate Street, has not the least Concern in any of the late Mr. John Newbery's Entertaining Books for Children; and to prevent having paltry Compilations obtruded on them, instead of Mr. John Newbery's useful Publications, they are desired to be particularly careful to apply for them to T. Carnan and F. Newbery, jun. (Successors to the late Mr. John Newbery), at No. 65, near the Bar in St. Paul's Church Yard.

Francis Newbery, the son of the founder, appears to have continued the intimate relations which existed between Goldsmith and his father. "Being pressed by pecuniary difficulties in 1771-1772," writes James Prior in his life of the author, "Goldsmith had at various periods obtained the advance of two or three hundred pounds from Newbery under the engagement of writing a novel, which, after the success of the 'Vicar of Wakefield,' promised to be one of the most popular speculations. Considerable delay took place in the execution of this undertaking, and when at length submitted to the approval of the bookseller, it proved to be in great measure the plot of the comedy of 'The Good Natur'd Man,' turned into a tale. Objections being taken to this, the manuscript was returned. Goldsmith declared himself unable or unwilling to write another, but in liquidation of the debt now pressingly demanded, said he should require time to look round for means of raising the money,



## AN ANCIENT MONOPOLY ABOLISHED

unless Mr. Newbery chose to take the chance of a play coming forward at Covent Garden. 'And yet, to tell you the truth, Frank,' added the candid poet in making the proposal, 'there are great doubts of its success.' Newbery accepted the offer, doubtful of being otherwise repaid, and the popularity of 'She Stoops to Conquer' gained, according to the recollection of the narrator, above £300 more than the sum advanced to the author."

Newbery the younger and Thomas Carnan continued their joint imprint until about the year 1782, when Newbery appears to have retired in order to devote himself to the still flourishing medicinal branch of the business. Carnan remained at the old address until 1788, but all the old copyrights passed at some time or other to the rival house started by the founder's nephew, now, however, carried on by his widow, from whom it subsequently passed to John Harris and his successors. Carnan deserves to be remembered for breaking down the Stationers' ancient monopoly in the matter of almanacs. He dared to publish almanacs of his own, whereupon the Stationers' Company not only anathematised them as counterfeit, but sent him to prison on a summary process as regularly as he issued them. "A friend of his family," wrote Charles Knight in 1865, "told me, some forty years ago, that this incorrigible old bookseller always at this season kept a clean shirt in his pocket, that he might make a decent appearance before the magistrate and keeper of Newgate. But Carnan persevered till the judges of the Court of Common Pleas decided against the validity of the patent, and an injunction which had been obtained in the Exchequer was immediately dissolved. The Stationers' Company then induced Lord North to bring a Bill into Parliament to revest in them the monopoly which had been declared illegal. In 1779, Erskine, in a speech which remains as one of the great triumphs of his oratory, procured the rejection of this Bill by a large majority."

Another venerable custom which was rudely shattered about this time was that based on the supposed

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

perpetuity of copyright, the London booksellers believing that they held this right under the Common Law for property not falling within the terms of the Copyright Act of 1709. It was Alexander Donaldson, the man from Edinburgh, who disillusioned them. Donaldson, a keen pioneer of popular reprints, had, as already mentioned, extended his business to London, starting a bookshop in the Strand, and issuing cheap editions of the most popular English books, to the no small discomfiture of his London brethren, who looked askance at his underselling prices. He brought matters to a head by reprinting Thomson's "Seasons," the statutory copyright of which, under the Act of 1709, had expired in 1758; but which, under what Johnson described as "an equitable title from usage," was still supposed to possess perpetual copyright, Andrew Millar having bought it in that belief from Thomson, and Millar's executors having sold it to Becket, Sterne's publisher, after the original publisher's death in 1768. The whole trade, indeed, had lived under that superstition since the passing of the Act of Anne. Publishers had bought and sold such property for large sums, honestly believing that they were dealing in copyrights which held good for ever. When, therefore, Donaldson violated this custom by reprinting the "Seasons," action was taken against him, and, what is more, Lord Chancellor Bathurst upholding the supposed Common Law right, gained a perpetual injunction against him. The decision was based on an earlier verdict in the similar case of *Millar v. Taylor*, where the matter had been allowed to rest; but Donaldson carried the case to the House of Lords, where, in February 1774, he won the day, the House deciding, by twenty-one votes to eleven, that no such Common Law right existed. This was very largely due to a speech from the great Whig lawyer, Lord Camden, who combined Pope's opinion of the generality of booksellers with his own aristocratic scorn of the man who made his living by his pen. "Knowledge," declared Lord Camden, "has no value or use for



STATIONERS' HALL

THE COPYRIGHT REGISTRY IS IN THE BASEMENT  
OFFICE IN THE RIGHT-HAND CORNER

*Photographed by W. J. Roberts*



## “ WRETCHED SCRIBBLERS ”

the solitary owner : to be enjoyed it must be communicated. *Scire tuum nihil est, nisi te scire hoc sciat alter.* Glory is the reward of science, and those who deserve it scorn all meaner views : I speak not of the scribblers for bread, who tease the press with their wretched productions ; fourteen years is too long a privilege for their perishable trash. It was not for gain that Bacon, Newton, Milton, and Locke instructed and delighted the world ; it would be unworthy such men to traffic with a dirty bookseller. When the bookseller offered Milton five pounds for his ‘ Paradise Lost,’ he did not reject it and commit it to the flames, nor did he accept the miserable pittance as the reward of his labour ; he knew that the real price of his work was immortality, and that posterity would pay it.” Johnson, though he concurred in the Lords’ decision, was “ loud and violent,” says Boswell, against Donaldson himself. Perhaps Donaldson’s nationality had something to do with it ; in any case he was very angry that the booksellers of London, for whom he uniformly professed much regard, should suffer from an invasion of what they had ever considered to be secure. This was before the action against Donaldson, and refers to his general system of issuing cheap reprints of popular books supposed to belong to other publishers :

“ He is a fellow,” said Johnson to George Dempster, “ who takes advantage of the law to injure his brethren ; for notwithstanding that the statute secures only fourteen years of exclusive right, it has always been understood by *the trade*, that he who buys the copyright of a book from the author obtains a perpetual property ; and upon that belief, numberless bargains are made to transfer that property after the expiration of the statutory term. Now Donaldson, I say, takes advantage here of people who have really an equitable title from usage ; and if we consider how few of the books, of which they buy the property, succeed so well as to bring profit, we should be of opinion that the term of fourteen years is too short ; it should be sixty years.” DEMPSTER : “ Donaldson, Sir, is anxious for the encouragement of literature. He reduces the price of books, so that poor students may buy them.” JOHNSON (laughing) : “ Well, Sir, allowing that to be



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his motive, he is no better than Robin Hood, who robbed the rich in order to give to the poor." \* It is remarkable [adds Boswell] that when the great question concerning Literary Property came to be ultimately tried before the supreme tribunal of this country in consequence of the very spirited exertions of Mr. Donaldson, Dr. Johnson was zealous against a perpetuity; but he thought that the term of exclusive right of authors should be considerably enlarged. He was then for granting a hundred years.

After the decision in the House of Lords an unsuccessful attempt was made to render copyright perpetual, the Bill passing the House of Commons in 1774, but being rejected by the Lords, and so the matter was left until 1801 and 1814, when the Act of 1709 was altered, the copyright term being extended to cover the length of the author's life, or twenty-eight years from the date of publication, whichever was the longer. In 1842 the Act was passed which remains in force down to the present day, copyright now enduring for the author's life, *plus* seven years, or should these two terms not amount to forty-two years, then for forty-two years certain from date of first publication.† Notwithstanding the unsuccessful attempt to secure a Bill for perpetual copyright, the London booksellers, as Boswell tells us, continued—for a time at all events—to preserve their ancient usage by mutual compact. They had an exclusive club of their own, dining once a month at the Shakespeare Tavern, where many a big undertaking was first suggested, chief among them being "Lives of the Poets," the story of which is told in the letter written by Edward Dilly, the elder of the two brothers who were Boswell's "worthy booksellers and good friends," to Bozzy himself, dated September 26, 1777:

\* Alexander Donaldson left a considerable fortune at his death. His son, James Donaldson, who became proprietor and editor of the "Edinburgh Advertiser," was even more successful, founding Donaldson's Hospital, Edinburgh, and leaving £220,000 for the maintenance of 300 poor children.

† The new Bill, introduced by the President of the Board of Trade this summer (1910), proposes that copyright shall last for life and for a period of fifty years after death.

## JOHNSON'S "LIVES OF THE POETS"

DEAR SIR,

You will find by this letter, that I am still in the same calm retreat, from the noise and bustle of London as when I wrote to you last. I am happy to find you had such an agreeable meeting with your old friend Dr. Johnson. . . . When he opens freely, every one is attentive to what he says, and cannot fail of improvement as well as pleasure. The edition of the Poets, now printing, will do honour to the English press; and a concise account of the life of each author, by Dr. Johnson, will be a very valuable addition, and stamp the reputation of this edition superior to anything that is gone before. The first cause that gave rise to this undertaking, I believe, was owing to the little trifling edition of the Poets, printing by the Martins at Edinburgh, and to be sold by Bell in London. Upon examining the volumes which were printed, the type was found so extremely small, that many persons could not read them; not only this inconvenience attended it, but the inaccuracy of the press was very conspicuous. These reasons, as well as the idea of an invasion of what we call our Literary Property, induced the London booksellers to print an elegant and accurate edition of all the English poets of reputation, from Chaucer to the present time.

Accordingly a select number of the most respectable booksellers met on the occasion; and, on consulting together, agreed that all the proprietors of copyright in the various poets should be summoned together; and when their opinions were given, to proceed immediately on the business. Accordingly a meeting was held, consisting of about forty of the most respectable booksellers of London, when it was agreed that an elegant and uniform edition of "The English Poets" should be immediately printed, with a concise account of the life of each author, by Dr. Samuel Johnson: and that three persons should be deputed to wait upon Dr. Johnson, to solicit him to undertake the Lives, viz. T. Davies, Strahan, and Cadell. The Doctor very politely undertook it, and seemed exceedingly pleased with the proposal. As to the terms, it was left entirely with the Doctor to name his own; he mentioned two hundred guineas; it was immediately agreed to; and a farther compliment, I believe, will be made him. A committee was likewise appointed to engage the best engravers, viz. Bartolozzi, Sherwin, Hall, etc. Likewise another committee for giving directions about the paper, printing, etc., so that the whole will be conducted with spirit, and in the best manner, with respect to authorship, editorship, engravings, etc., etc. My brother will give you a list of the poets we mean to give,

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

many of which are within the time of the Act of Queen Anne, which Martin and Bell cannot give, as they have no property in them; the proprietors are almost all the booksellers in London of consequence. I am, dear Sir, ever yours,

EDWARD DILLY.

Johnson's moderation in demanding so small a sum is extraordinary, says Malone in remarking on this letter. "Had he asked one thousand, or even fifteen hundred guineas, the booksellers, who knew the value of his name, would doubtless have readily given it. They have probably got five thousand guineas by this work in the course of twenty-five years." But Johnson, according to Boswell, paid little attention to profit from his literary labours. John Bell, who thus indirectly helped to father the "Lives of the Poets," was not only, like Alexander Donaldson, a pioneer of cheapness. Full of ideas, he was the first man to set the fashion of discarding the long f (s), which he did in publishing his "British Theatre"—intended to supersede the old octavo editions of single plays and the large collected editions of the dramatists—and he was the first publisher, also, of English pocket classics. His editions of the "British Poets" ran to over a hundred volumes, issued from his busy shop in the Strand from 1777 to 1789. The present house of Bell—the story of which is told on a later page—is of younger growth, and has no connexion with John Bell, who died in 1831.

Only two of the twenty-six houses which continued to publish the first edition of Johnson's "Lives of the Poets" (1779-1781) have been continued in direct succession down to the present day—Thomas Longman and John Murray. The first John Murray, at that date, had only been in business ten years, but it was long enough to find mention in Boswell's comprehensive gossip:

Somebody mentioned the Reverend Mr. Mason's prosecution of Mr. Murray, the bookseller, for having inserted in a collection of Gray's "Poems" only fifty lines, of which Mr. Mason had still the exclusive property under the statute of Queen Anne; and

## JOHNSON'S KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRADE

that Mr. Mason had persevered, notwithstanding his being requested to name his own terms of compensation. Johnson signified his displeasure at Mr. Mason's conduct very strongly; but added, by way of shewing that he was not surprised at it, "Mason's a Whig." MRS. KNOWLES (not hearing distinctly): "What, a prig, Sir?" JOHNSON: "Worse, Madam; a Whig! But he is both."

The feud between Whiggery and the House of Murray, as Knight suggests, might thus have had a remote origin. One other extract we must take from Boswell before we leave his illuminating information on the book trade of the eighteenth century. In March of the year previously to undertaking the "Lives of the Poets" Johnson was consulted with regard to the management of the Clarendon Press, and a letter which he received on the subject from "a respectable dignitary of the Church" referred, apparently, to a complaint that the trustees of that Press did not allow the London booksellers a sufficient profit upon their publications. Whereupon Johnson wrote the following letter to Dr. Wetherall, Master of University College, Oxford:

. . . The last part of the Doctor's letter is of great importance. The complaint which he makes I have heard long ago, and did not know but it was redressed. It is unhappy that a practice so erroneous has not been altered; for altered it must be or our press will be useless with all its privileges. The booksellers, who, like all other men, have strong prejudices in their own favour, are enough inclined to think the practice of printing and selling books by any but themselves, an encroachment on the right of their fraternity; and have need of stronger inducements to curculate academical publications than those of another; for, of that mutual co-operation by which the general trade is carried on, the University can bear no part. Of those whom he neither loves nor fears, and from whom he expects no reciprocation of good offices, why should any man promote the interest but for profit? I suppose, with all our scholastic ignorance of mankind, we are still too knowing to expect that the booksellers will erect themselves into patrons, and buy and sell under the influence of a disinterested zeal for the promotion of learning.

To the booksellers, if we look for either honour or profit from



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our press, not only their common profit, but something more must be allowed ; and if books, printed at Oxford, are expected to be rated at a high price, that price must be levied on the public, and paid by the ultimate purchaser, not by the intermediate agents. What price shall be set upon the book is, to the booksellers, wholly indifferent, provided that they gain a proportionate profit by negotiating the sale. Why books printed at Oxford should be particularly dear, I am, however, unable to find. We pay no rent ; we inherit many of our instruments and materials ; lodging and victuals are cheaper than at London ; and, therefore, workmanship ought, at least, not to be dearer. Our expenses are naturally less than those of booksellers ; and in most cases, communities are content with less profit than individuals.

It is, perhaps, not considered through how many hands a book often passes, before it comes into those of the reader ; or what part of the profit each hand must retain, as a motive for transmitting it to the next. We will call our primary agent in London, Mr. Cadell, who receives our books from us, gives them room in his warehouse, and issues them on demand ; by him they are sold to Mr. Dilly, a wholesale bookseller, who sends them into the country ; and the last seller is the country bookseller. Here are three profits to be paid between the printer and the reader, or, in the style of commerce, between the manufacturer and the consumer ; and if any of these profits is too penuriously distributed, the process of commerce is interrupted. We are now come to the practical question, what is to be done ? You will tell me, with reason, that I have said nothing, till I declare how much, according to my opinion, of the ultimate price ought to be distributed through the whole succession of sale.

The deduction, I am afraid, will appear very great : but let it be considered before it is refused. We must allow, for profit, between thirty and thirty-five *per cent.*, between six and seven shillings in the pound ; that is, for every book which costs the last buyer twenty shillings, we must charge Mr. Cadell with something less than fourteen. We must set the copies at fourteen shillings each, and superadd what is called the quarterly-book, or for every hundred books so charged we must deliver a hundred and four. The profits will then stand thus :

Mr. Cadell, who runs no hazard, and gives no credit, will be paid for warehouse room and attendance by a shilling profit on each book, and his chance of the quarterly-book. Mr. Dilly, who buys the book for fifteen shillings, and who will expect the quarterly-book if he takes five-and-twenty, will send it to his



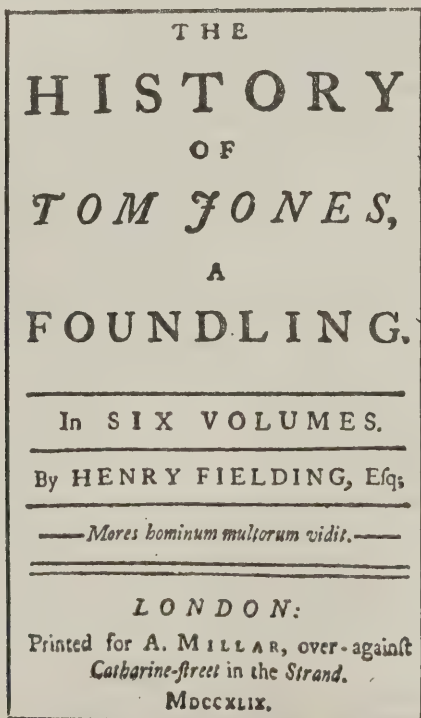
## TITLE-PAGE OF "TOM JONES"

country customer at sixteen and sixpence, by which, at the hazard of loss, and the certainty of long credit, he gains the regular profit of ten *per cent.* which is expected in the wholesale trade. ¶

The country bookseller, buying at sixteen and sixpence, and commonly trusting a considerable time, gains but three and sixpence; and if he trusts a year, not much more than two and sixpence; otherwise than as he may, perhaps, take as long credit as he gives. With less profit than this, and more you see he cannot have, the country bookseller cannot live; for his receipts are small, and his debts sometimes bad. Thus, dear Sir, I have been incited by Dr. \*\*\*\*\*'s letter to give you a detail of the circulation of books, which, perhaps, every man has not had opportunity of knowing; and which those who know it, do not, perhaps, always distinctly consider.

I am, &c.

SAM. JOHNSON.



## CHAPTER ELEVEN : THE END OF THE GOLDEN AGE OF BOOKSELLING

**A**FTER Johnson's death in 1784 the chief honours of the "Trade" \* belonged to Thomas Cadell, "our primary agent in London," as Johnson described him in the letter with which we have closed the preceding chapter. Thomas Cadell, it will not be forgotten, was associated with the Doctor in the "Lives of the Poets," supporting his partner, William Strahan, and Tom Davies, during the momentous interview on behalf of the "Chapter." Many years before this Cadell had started life as an apprentice to Andrew Millar, who took him into partnership in 1765, and two years later, on Millar's retirement—to die in the following year—the old apprentice became his successor. Cadell still occupied the famous house in the Strand at No. 141, "over against Catherine Street"—where the first Jacob Tonson had hung out his sign of the Shakespeare Head, to be hauled down when the bigoted Scot, Andrew Millar, replaced it with Buchanan's Head. Many memories clustered round this long-forgotten bookshop, which was haunted by a whole century of illustrious authors—Swift, Addison, Steele and Pope, Johnson and his faithful Boswell, Fielding and Thomson, and the three authors who made history so popular in their day, Hume, Robertson and Gibbon—until the site was obliterated by one of the wings of Somerset House. Cadell, like his predecessor Millar, had been associated with William Strahan in his literary enterprises up to this period of his career, but Strahan, now in his seventieth year, did not long survive his friend, Dr. Johnson, for he died in 1785. Cadell and Strahan together had been worthy successors of the celebrated publishers who

\* "As physicians are called 'The Faculty,' and Counsellors at Law 'The Profession,'" writes Boswell, "the booksellers of London are called 'The Trade.' Johnson disapproved of these denominations."

## STRAHAN AND BLAIR'S SERMONS

preceded them. "There will be no books of importance now printed in London," wrote Hume to his countryman Strahan, on receiving a presentation copy of the first volume of Gibbon's "Decline and Fall" in 1776, "but through your hands and Mr. Cadell's." And they did, indeed, succeed in gathering round them a remarkable group of men—not only Hume, Robertson, Gibbon and the other authors already mentioned in this connexion, but also Thomas Somerville, Adam Smith, Blackstone, Mackenzie—"The Man of Feeling"—and many others. In 1777 Strahan nearly lost a most successful venture—Blair's "Sermons"—through one of those errors of judgment to which every publisher is liable, and it was only on Dr. Johnson's advice that he saved it in time. Dr. Hugh Blair, anxious to extend to London his reputation as a preacher, had offered a collection of his sermons to Strahan, perhaps on the advice of Adam Smith, Hume, or Robertson, all of whom were members of the Scottish literary circle to which he belonged. Cadell, apparently, was not particularly struck with the sermons, for he wrote to Blair discouraging their publication.

Such at first [writes Boswell] was the unpropitious state of one of the most successful theological books that has ever appeared. Mr. Strahan, however, had sent one of the sermons to Dr. Johnson for his opinion; and after his unfavourable letter to Dr. Blair had been sent off, he received from Johnson on Christmas Eve, a note in which was the following paragraph: "I have read over Dr. Blair's first sermon with more than approbation; to say it is good, is to say too little." I believe Mr. Strahan had very soon after this time a conversation with Dr. Johnson concerning them; and then he very candidly wrote again to Dr. Blair, enclosing Johnson's note, and agreeing to purchase the volume, for which he and Mr. Cadell gave 100*l*. The sale was so rapid and extensive, and the approbation of the public so high, that to their honour be it recorded, the proprietors made Dr. Blair a present first of one sum, and afterwards of another of 50*l*., thus voluntarily doubling the stipulated price; and when he prepared another volume, they gave him at once 300*l*., being in

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

all 500*l.*, by an agreement to which I am a subscribing witness ; and now for a third octavo volume he has received no less than 600*l.*

Boswell also tells the story of the plagiarism of Henry Mackenzie's "Man of Feeling"—originally published by Strahan and Cadell—by a young Irish clergyman named Eccles, who was afterwards drowned near Bath. This impudent impostor had taken the trouble to transcribe the whole book, with blottings, interlineations, and corrections, afterwards displaying it as his own original work. The belief in Eccles as the author became so general that Strahan and Cadell were compelled to publish an advertisement contradicting the claim, and declaring that they had purchased the copyright from Henry Mackenzie. Five years after the first appearance of "The Man of Feeling" came the splendid success of the first volume of Gibbon's "Decline and Fall." The historian himself—M.P. for Liskeard at the time—has told us something of the fluctuating fortunes of this book :

The volume of my History, which had been somewhat delayed by the novelty and tumult of a first session, was now ready for the press. After the perilous adventure had been declined by my friend Mr. Elmsley, I agreed upon easy terms with Mr. Thomas Cadell, a respectable bookseller, and Mr. William Strahan, an eminent printer ; and they undertook the care and risk of the publication, which derived more credit from the name of the shop than from that of the author. The last revisal of the proofs was submitted to my vigilance ; and many blemishes of style, which had been invisible in the manuscript, were discovered and corrected in the printed sheet. So moderate were our hopes, that the original impression had been stinted to five hundred, till the number was doubled by the prophetic taste of Mr. Strahan. . . . I am at a loss how to describe the success of the work, without betraying the vanity of the writer. The first impression was exhausted in a few days ; a second and third edition were scarcely adequate to the demand ; and the bookseller's property was twice invaded by the pirates of Dublin.

An interesting document survives to show us the kind of accounts which passed between author and publisher

## GIBBON'S ACCOUNT WITH STRAHAN

in this case.\* A thousand copies had been printed of the first edition of the first volume, fifteen hundred of the second edition, and another thousand of the third edition. It is to this last that the account refers, from which it will be seen that Gibbon took two-thirds of the profits, and that Strahan and Cadell shared the remaining third between them. No wonder Gibbon was satisfied with his publishers! His second and third volumes did not appear until 1781 and the fourth and completing volume until 1788—three years after Strahan's death—when the day of publication was delayed in order, writes the historian, “that it might coincide with the fifty-first anniversary of my own birthday; the double festival was celebrated by a cheerful literary dinner at Mr. Cadell's house; and I seemed to blush while they read an elegant compliment from Mr. Hayley.” Peter Elmsley, who must have been very sorry for himself as he watched the golden harvest being reaped from the very work which he had declined, lived to see the more enterprising

\* “State of the Account of Mr. Gibbon's ‘Roman Empire.’ Third edition. 1st Vol. No. 1000. April 30th, 1777.

	£	s.	d.
Printing 90 sheets at 1 <i>l</i> . 6 <i>s</i> . with notes at the bottom of the page . . . . .	117	0	0
180 reams of paper at 19 <i>s</i> . . . . .	171	0	0
Paid the Corrector, extra care . . . . .	5	5	0
Advertisements and incidental expenses . . . . .	16	15	0
	<hr/> £310 0 0 <hr/>		
	£	s.	d.
1000 books at 16 <i>s</i> . . . . .	800	0	0
Deduct as above . . . . .	310	0	0
	<hr/>		
Profit on this edition when sold . . . . .	£490	0	0
	<hr/>		
Mr. Gibbon's two-thirds is . . . . .	326	13	4
Messrs. Strahan and Cadell's . . . . .	163	6	8
	<hr/>		
	<u>£490 0 0</u> <hr/>		

Errors excepted.”



## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

publisher made Alderman and afterwards Sheriff of London, and then—like Tonson and Lintot in earlier days—followed him to the grave in the same year (1802).\*

Many gaps were made in the publishing world of London in this last quarter of the eighteenth century. John Rivington, continuing the orthodox traditions of his father, kept his house at the head of the religious trade until his death, 1792, when he was succeeded by his two elder sons, Francis and Charles, who, in the following year, established the "British Critic" in partnership with William Belloe and Archdeacon Nares.† John Rivington had added greatly to the prestige of the firm by his appointment in 1760 as publisher to the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, an appointment which remained in the house for more than seventy years. Burke also made him his publisher after Robert Dodsley's death.‡

Edward Dilly, who gave Boswell the inside history of the "Lives of the Poets," and was so fond of a gossip that he is said to have talked himself to death, dealt in books which probably caused the Rivingtons to raise their hands in pious horror, for both Edward Dilly and his younger brother Charles, whom he took into partnership, were dissenters, and not only published in England many theological works of that school, but exported great quantities to America. Edward Dilly died in 1779, but his brother—Boswell's publisher—lived until 1807, four years after becoming Master of the Stationers' Company.

\* Peter Elmsley's bookshop in the Strand was a favourite haunt of literary men and booklovers in the second half of the eighteenth century. It was here that Gibbon first met Porson.

† Nares acted as editor, and with Belloe's help continued the "British Critic" as a monthly periodical, with remarkable success for many of its years, down to 1813, when a new series was begun under the editorship of Dean Lyall. A third series was started in 1825, but ceased at the end of the third volume. Several attempts were made to revive it, but without any lasting success.

‡ Rivingtons published the first complete edition of Burke's works in 1853, in eight volumes, edited by Francis Rivington, then head of the house.

## THE KILMARNOCK "BURNS"

When Dr. Johnson died—to return to the year 1784—the house of Longmans had not yet achieved the high distinction which it first earned with the reign of Thomas Norton Longman. John Murray II. was only six years old—Byron himself was still unborn; and Archibald Constable was but four years the senior of the great John Murray. But away on the hills of Ayrshire was a “heaven-taught ploughman,” racked with troubles which, though largely of his own making, drove him at times to the very border-land of insanity, yet scribbling, between-while, some of the finest poems that were ever written. Robert Burns was in the midst of his “Highland Mary” romance and the distractions which followed the natural consequences of his relations with Jean Armour, when he arranged with John Wilson, a printer of Kilmarnock, to publish the first edition of his poems. He had resolved to leave the country for a post as book-keeper on a West Indian estate, and he only hoped to provide his passage-money out of the profits from the poems. The precious little volume, issued at the subscription price of three shillings, appeared in July 1786. Only three perfect uncut copies are now known to exist, one of which, preserved in the Burns Cottage Museum at Ayr, cost the trustees £1,000. Another copy was bought by Quaritch in 1907 for £700. The third is in a private collection in New York.

I threw off six hundred copies [Burns afterwards wrote], for which I got subscriptions for about three hundred and fifty. My vanity was highly gratified by the reception I met with from the public; and besides, I pocketed, all expenses deducted, nearly twenty pounds. This came very seasonably, as I was thinking of indenting myself, for want of money to procure my passage. As soon as I was master of nine guineas, the price of wafting me to the torrid zone, I took a steerage passage in the first ship that was to sail from the Clyde; for

Hungry ruin had me in the wind.

I had been for some days skulking from covert to covert, under the terrors of a jail; as some ill-advised people had uncoupled

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

the merciless pack of the law at my heels.\* I had taken the last farewell of my friends; my chest was on the way to Greenock; I had composed the last song I should ever measure in Caledonia, "The gloomy night is gathering fast," when a letter from Dr. Blacklock to a friend of mine overthrew my schemes by opening up new prospects to my poetic ambition.

This led to the visit to Edinburgh, where Burns found himself the literary lion of the day, and also to the second edition of his poems. Wilson, the Kilmarnock printer, had declined to undertake this unless the poet would advance the price of the paper required for it—which Burns was unable to do. In Edinburgh, however, he found a publisher in William Creech, then the chief bookseller in the Scottish capital, through whom the second and enlarged edition was issued by subscription in April of the following year. Burns had every reason to be proud of his subscription list, including as it did many of the most distinguished names of the Scottish aristocracy, some of whom subscribed very handsomely, Lord Eglinton, for example, taking as many as forty-two copies. Unfortunately, Burns had to wait a long time for his money, and he abuses Creech heartily in his letters to his friends at that time. But there was a pleasant surprise for him when at length the accounts of his dilatory bookseller were made up, for instead of the £200 or so which he told one of his patrons he hoped to gain by this edition, he found himself, on the day of reckoning, in possession of £500, if not of £600. We all know the rest of his story—his home-making at last with Jean Armour as his wife, his life as exciseman at £70 a year, his generous contributions to Johnson's "Museum of Scottish Song," as well as to Thomson's greater collection, and the everlasting struggle with poverty which fretted his proud spirit to the end. Scotland did something towards atoning for her neglect of the poet in his later

\* The truth being that Jean Armour's father, though he refused to accept Burns as a son-in-law, notwithstanding his daughter's unfortunate condition, was pursuing him at law in order to extort money from him.

## COWPER AND HIS PUBLISHER

years by raising a subscription for his family, the sum eventually amounting to £700; the memorial edition of his works, which appeared in 1800, realised a further £1,400. Stewart of Glasgow had previously published a number of Burns's suppressed poems in a series of weekly tracts, afterwards reissuing them in volume form under the title, "Poems ascribed to Robert Burns"; and "The Letters addressed to Clarinda," copies of which had been surreptitiously obtained, came from the same publisher in 1802. "Clarinda" herself (Mrs. Maclehose) lived until 1841, and it was not until two years after her death that the authorised edition of these letters was published, edited and arranged by her grandson, W. C. Maclehose. The "Reliques of Robert Burns," including seventy-two of his letters and some poems, were collected and published in London in 1808, by R. H. Cromek, who was at this time, as we shall presently see, more closely associated with Blake.

At the close of the eighteenth century another national poet was spending the last few years of his life in Norfolk. William Cowper was not only more fortunate than Burns both in popular and official recognition during his own time, but voted himself—for a while at all events—more than satisfied with his publisher. This worthy, Joseph Johnson, had held an honourable place in the ranks of the leading London publishers since the days of Johnson's "Lives of the Poets," in which he had a share. In close sympathy with the advanced thought of his day, he issued the scientific writings of Priestley, was bookseller and publisher for Horne Tooke and John Newton, and counted Erasmus Darwin among his other notable authors. It was John Newton who introduced Cowper, with their joint "Olney Hymns" in 1779, to "my old friend Joseph Johnson, in St. Paul's Churchyard," as he calls him in a letter to John Thornton, of Clapham, who had promised to bear the risks of publication. "He printed my 'Narrative' and volume of 'Sermons,'" he adds; "and though he is not a *professor*, I believe him a man of honour and



## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

integrity." Newton proved uncommonly useful to this "old friend," for when Cowper handed over to him the entire matter of the publication of his own first volume of poems he not only took them straightway to the bookseller, but, on his promising to take the whole charge upon himself, made him a present of the copyright. Cowper was perfectly satisfied. He had already told Newton that he only wrote for amusement, as something "towards diverting that train of melancholy thoughts"; and when Johnson suggested to him that the preface which Newton had contributed to the book—well-meant, no doubt, but alluding unnecessarily to the poet's painful malady and making too much of the religious value of the volume—should be omitted he at once agreed. "Mr. Newton," said Cowper in a letter on this subject to his friend William Unwin, "has written (he could indeed write no other) a very sensible, as well as a very complimentary preface; and it is printed. But the bookseller, who knows him well, and esteems him highly, is anxious to have it cancelled, and, with my consent first obtained, has offered to negotiate that matter with the author. He judges that though it would serve to recommend the volume to the religious, it would disgust the profane, and that there is really no need of a preface at all. I have found Johnson a very judicious man on other occasions, and am therefore willing that he should determine for me upon this." In deprecating any offence to Newton when the preface had thus been cancelled the poet pays another eloquent tribute to his publisher, whose interference with his text would have roused a more spirited poet to furious indignation. "I have reason to be very much satisfied with my publisher," he writes. "He marked such lines as did not please him, and, as often as I could, I paid all possible respect to his animadversions. You will accordingly find, at least if you recollect how they stood in the MS., that several passages are the better for having undergone his critical notice. Indeed, I do not know where I could have found a bookseller who





### THE STATIONERS' BARGE

*A souvenir of the days when the Lord Mayor proceeded to Westminster by river, accompanied by the Livery Companies. It was long the custom of the Stationers' Company, while the Lord Mayor's ceremony was being enacted in Westminster Hall, to cross over in this barge and pay its respects to its patron, the Archbishop of Canterbury. When the river pageants were discontinued the Company sold the barge, which ended its days as the boathouse of Oriel College, Oxford.*



## COWPER GROWS MERCENARY

could have pointed out to me my defects with more discernment; and as I find it is a fashion for modern bards to publish the names of the literati who have favoured their works with a revisal, would myself most willingly have acknowledged my obligations to Johnson, and so I told him." Imagine Byron's fury if the great John Murray had ventured to tamper in this way with his work!

Joseph Johnson continued in Cowper's good books at least until 1786, and the poet was evidently satisfied with the payments which he received for most of his later books. "Johnson behaves very handsomely in the affairs of my two volumes," he writes in that year to Lady Hesketh. "He acts with a liberality not often found in persons of his occupation, and to mention it when occasion calls me to it is a justice due to him." It is a pity that poet and publisher did not continue these cordial relations to the end, but there was a decided rift within the lute in their dealings over the translation of "Homer," which Cowper, like Pope, issued by subscription. His printed Proposals brought in a list of subscriptions which he believed need not fear any comparison with Pope's—"considering," he adds, "that we live in days of terrible taxation, and when verse, not being necessary to life, is accounted dear, be it what it may, even at the lowest price." Cowper, by this time, had become as keen a bargainer as the most mercenary of authors. "I devoutly second your droll wish that the booksellers may contend with me," he writes to Joseph Hall in 1790. "The more the better. Seven times seven, if they please; and let them fight with the fury of Achilles:

Till every rubric-post be crimson'd o'er  
With blood of booksellers, in battle slain  
For me, and not a periwig untorn.

The two volumes were to be issued at the price of three guineas—which worked out, in the poet's own reckoning, at less than the seventh part of a farthing per line—and by

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

July 7, 1791, he complains of his head "being filled with the cares of publication, and the bargain that I am making with my bookseller." How the affair was settled he tells in his own delightful way in a letter written four days later to "my dearest Coz," Lady Hesketh:

MY DEAREST COZ,—I am not much better pleased with that dealer in authors than yourself. His first proposal, which was to pay me with my own money, or in other words to get my copy for nothing, not only dissatisfied but hurt me, implying, as I thought, the meanest opinion possible of my labours. For that for which an intelligent man will give nothing, can be worth nothing. The consequence was that my spirits sank considerably below par, and have but just begun to recover themselves. His second offer, which is to pay all expenses, and to give me a thousand pounds next midsummer, leaving the copyright still in my hands, is more liberal. With this offer I have closed, and Mr. Rose will to-morrow clench the bargain. Josephus understands that Johnson will gain two hundred pounds by it, but I apprehend that he is mistaken, and that Mr. Rose is right, who estimates his gains at once. Mr. Hill's mistake, if he be mistaken, arises from his rating the expenses of the press at only five hundred pounds, whereas Johnson rates them at six. Be that as it may, I am contented. If he gains two, I shall not grudge, and if he gains but one, considering all things, I think he will gain enough.

As to Sephus' scheme of signing the seven hundred copies in order to prevent a clandestine multiplication of them, at the same time that I feel the wisdom of it, I feel also an unsurmountable dislike of it. It would be calling Johnson a knave, and telling the public that I think him one. Now, though I do not perhaps think so highly of his liberality as some people do, and as I was once myself disposed to think, yet I have no reason at present to charge him with dishonesty. I must even take my chance, as other poets do, and if I am wronged, must comfort myself with what somebody has said,—that authors are the natural prey of booksellers.

In justice to Joseph Johnson it is only fair to add that he left a reputation which is more in accordance with Newton's judgment of him as "a man of honour and integrity" than the impression made by Cowper's last letter. He held the political and religious views of his more revolutionary authors, and suffered nine months'

## BLAKE AND HIS PUBLISHERS

imprisonment for publishing prohibited works of Gilbert Wakefield. But he could afford to temper his suffering by living in style in the Marshal's House, where he was free to entertain his literary and political friends as handsomely as he pleased. He was also a generous subscriber to Fuseli's "Milton Gallery," and from 1788 to 1799 published the "Analytical Review."

More interesting than either of these enterprises, however, was his association with William Blake, who found in him, in 1791, a sympathetic publisher for his unfinished work on "The French Revolution," which was no more successful than his first volume of verse, the "Poetical Sketches," printed in 1783 at the expense mainly of the sculptor Flaxman and his friend the Rev. Henry Mathew. The "Poetical Sketches" were followed in 1789 by the "Songs of Innocence," Blake in this case not only writing and illustrating the book himself, but printing it by a process of his own, and finally superintending its binding at the hands of his devoted wife. Five years later, and by similar means, came the companion book, "Songs of Experience," afterwards bound up with the other in a volume for which Blake received, at various periods, prices ranging from thirty shillings to five guineas—occasionally even more. Blake issued most of his works in this way, the exceptions including his illustrations for two little books by Mary Wollstonecraft, published, like his "French Revolution," by Joseph Johnson, who, with Fuseli and others, made "great objections," he writes in connexion with his memorable association with Hayley in the "Life of Cowper," "to my doing anything but the mere drudgery of business, and intimating that, if I do not confine myself to this, I shall not live." Blake did a trifle better in his dealings with Edwards of Bond Street, who only paid him, however, at the rate of a guinea a plate for his designs for a new edition of Young's "Night Thoughts."

But the one publisher of all others remembered in connexion with Blake is the notorious Robert H. Cromeck,



## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

who was more a printseller and engraver than a dealer in books. Cromek not only paid him the lowest market value for his matchless illustrations of Blair's "Grave"—twenty guineas for the two drawings—but broke the agreement by which the artist was also given the engraving to do. Worse still, he stole from Blake the idea of his "Chaucer's Pilgrims" for the oil-painting which he afterwards commissioned from Stothard. The dispute which ensued, and the rival exhibitions, are matters which lie rather outside our path. It is depressing to think of the disappointments which dogged the footsteps of this unappreciated genius through the remaining years of his life. He wrote more at this period, he declared, than Shakespeare and Milton together; but no publisher would print what he wrote; he gave up trying to publish them himself; and practically all these manuscripts were either lost or destroyed.

The beginning of the nineteenth century found the book trade still struggling with the problems which, though changed with the lapse of time, were fundamentally the same as in the days of the old monopolists. There was trouble, if not open war, between the more conservative booksellers on the one hand, and the cheapening booksellers who declined to bow their heads to old-established usages. These black sheep formed themselves about the end of the eighteenth century into an independent band of "Associated Booksellers," among them being Thomas Hood—the bookseller of the Poultry, where his son, Thomas Hood, the poet, was born—and James Lackington. Lackington, though an arrant egoist, was a man of many ideas, and great independence of character. He sold for cash down only; no one—not "even the nobility"—was allowed any credit; and in spite of all the ridicule which the trade as a whole heaped upon this experiment, and the low prices which Lackington charged for his books, he retired with a large fortune from the "Temple of the Muses," as he called his once famous book-shop at the corner of Finsbury

## “REMAINDER” BARGAINS

Square. This building was so vast that a mail-coach and four were easily driven round the counters at its opening, which took place not long after Lackington, in 1793, sold a fourth share of the business to Robert Allen, who had been brought up as a boy in his shop. Lackington was the first bookseller, we believe, who speculated systematically in the “Remainder” trade, the last refuge of the literary failures, and of books that have had their little day of success and died. He tells us, in his curious “Memoirs and Confessions,” that he had a hard fight to live down the trade prejudices of his time. “I was very much surprised,” he writes, “to learn that it was common for such as purchased remainders to destroy or burn one-half or three-fourths of such books, and to charge the full price, or nearly that, for such as they kept in hand.” Lackington changed all this, but it was some time before he forced the trade to yield. And he made many enemies in this way, “some of whom . . . by a variety of pitiful insinuations and dark innuendoes strained every nerve to injure the reputation I had already acquired with the public, determined to effect my ruin, which indeed they daily prognosticated, with a demon-like spirit, must inevitably speedily follow.” Perhaps it was the recollection of this opposition which made poor Lackington so boastful in his hour of triumph. He built a chariot, on the doors of which he had a motto inscribed: “Small profits do great things,” and in this chariot, attended by his servants, he drove round the kingdom in state.

The romantic side of the remainder trade would make an interesting chapter in literary history. Some of the most famous bargains were made by Thomas Tegg, who also made himself notorious as a publisher of cheap reprints and abridgments, and was named by Carlyle in his historic petition to the Commons on the Copyright Bill: “May it please your Honourable House,” the petition concluded on the author’s behalf, “to forbid all Thomas Teggs, and other extraneous persons . . . to steal from

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

him his small winnings, for a space of sixty years, at shortest. After sixty years, unless your Honourable House provide otherwise, they may begin to steal." Tegg made some of his best remainder bargains during the 1826 panic, when books were flung away at almost any price. The pick of Scott's novels, for instance, he bought at fourpence apiece, afterwards reselling at a very handsome profit. Another successful deal was the purchase of the remainder and copyright of "Murray's Family Library" in 1834—100,000 volumes at a shilling each, which he cleared out at a profit of more than a hundred per cent. "'Twas the broom that swept the booksellers' warehouses," he writes in his autobiography. His most famous haul was in connexion with A. J. Valpy's *Delphin Classics* in 162 octavo volumes, the whole stock of which, amounting to nearly 50,000 copies, he sold off in about two years. Similar things happen nowadays, though on a much smaller scale. Lord Avebury's "Seedlings," we believe, was at one time sold as a remainder at six shillings the set, but you cannot buy it in the auction room in the same form now under fifteen shillings. Even "Omar" has been among the remainders, the first edition of FitzGerald's translation, which was published by Bernard Quaritch, falling, still-born, into the penny box outside.\* The illustrated edition of Challoner Smith's invaluable work on "British Mezzotinto Portraits Described" was originally published at eight guineas a copy, but was remaindered at £5 each. Not many years ago one of these examples realised twenty-three guineas. Remainders, indeed, have proved to be the making of many a good book. Only the other day we heard of such a work which, after being abandoned by the publisher as a failure a few years ago, was sold under the hammer to the trade, and becoming known simply through being distributed broadcast among the booksellers has now settled down to a steady sale. As it turned out, the remainder market was

\* See p. 310.

## LACKINGTON'S TOUR

the cheapest form of advertisement the book could have had. Another case was that of an excellent volume of Greek history, sold off after a time as a comparative failure ; yet a few weeks later it was adopted as a textbook at Cambridge, and the publisher had to re-set it. There must be hundreds of similar instances. Sometimes the author himself is responsible for a remainder—especially with a book that has a regular sale. Something has happened to put his work a little out of date ; he insists on a new edition ; and the old stock has to go by the board. It is usually worth while making inquiries before buying a remainder of this description ; the new edition may make it dear at almost any price.

Lackington has left us some valuable sketches of the book trade as he found it in different parts of the country when, as already mentioned, he made his tours in state. Travelling from London to Edinburgh by way of York and Newcastle-on-Tyne and returning through Glasgow, Carlisle, Leeds, and Manchester, he states that he “ was much surprised as well as disappointed, at meeting with very few of the works of the most esteemed authors, and those few consisted in general of ordinary editions, besides an assemblage of common trifling books, bound in sheep ; and that, too, in a very bad manner. It is true, at York and Leeds, there were a few (and but very few) good books ; but in all the other towns between London and Edinburgh nothing but trash was to be found ; in the latter city, indeed, a few capital articles are kept, but in no other part of Scotland.” A year or two later he tried the West of England and found matters just as bad ; London was “ the grand emporium of Great Britain for books, engrossing nearly the whole of what is valuable in that very extensive, beneficial, and lucrative branch of trade.” Lackington had been a journeyman shoemaker at Bristol and other places in the West of England, and he amused himself when he made his tour as a successful bookseller by calling on his old masters and addressing each with “ Pray, Sir, have you got any occasion ? ”



## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

which, he explains in his autobiography, was the term then used by journeymen shoemakers when seeking employment. "Most of these honest men had quite forgotten my person, as many of them had not seen me since I worked for them ; so that it is not easy for you to conceive with what surprise they gazed on me. For you must know that I had the vanity (I call it humour) to do this in my chariot, attended by my servants ; and on telling them who I was all appeared to be very happy to see me." Had Lackington postponed his tour a year or two he might have been more favourably impressed with the bookselling work that was being done in at least one of these West of England towns, for it was within the next few years that Joseph Cottle, of Bristol—who was something of a poet himself as well as a bookseller—became acquainted with Wordsworth, Southey, Coleridge, and Lamb, and assisted them on the road to fame when they stood most in need of a helping hand. In his "Biographia Literaria" Coleridge refers to Cottle as "a friend from whom I never received any advice that was not wise, or a remonstrance that was not gentle and affectionate." But Cottle undid much of the good he had done when he published his volume of recollections a year or so after Coleridge's death, giving to the world his distressing details of the poet's opium mania. Before the end of the eighteenth century the House of Longmans bought the copyrights belonging to the Bristol bookseller, but made him a present of the "Lyrical Ballads," and Cottle, in turn, handed on the copyright to Wordsworth. Although the "Ballads" were then set down as being of little pecuniary value, Cottle describes the gift as having been made with Thomas Longman's "accustomed generosity." Cottle, after giving up his Bristol business, devoted more of his time to writing indifferent verse, and drew upon himself in consequence the bitter satire of Byron.

Archibald Constable, the Edinburgh potentate, had begun his publishing career a few years before the





ARCHIBALD CONSTABLE  
*After the portrait by Sir Henry Raeburn*



## “ KING OF THE BOOKSELLERS ”

eighteenth century came to an end. In 1800 he started his “ Farmer’s Magazine ” ; a year later he took over the “ Scots Magazine ”—first edited for him by Leyden—and in 1802 came his first number of the “ Edinburgh Review,” with which began his great fame as a publisher. Scott had but lately taken to literature, but it was not long before he joined the brilliant band of contributors to the new Review. The house of Blackwood was then unknown. William Blackwood, the founder, was compiling book-catalogues in London at the time, but he returned to Edinburgh in 1804, and started publishing on his own account six years later.

One worthy who fell out of the ranks in the first year of the nineteenth century was George Robinson, who earned the name of the “ King of the Booksellers,” from the fact that he built up a wholesale trade in Paternoster Row which became the greatest known in the country up to that time. He also bought many sound copyrights, and did a considerable business in publishing. Robinson was succeeded by his son and brother, whom he had taken into partnership in 1784, but the business was “ so immensely large,” says Timperley, “ as to exceed their strength, when the grand pillar of the house was removed.” Apart from other misfortunes, their exertions in trade were baffled in a single night by the destruction by fire of a printing office in which they were largely concerned, and they went into bankruptcy : but their assets proved so valuable that they not only settled all their creditors in full, but re-established themselves with flying colours, though neither of the partners lived long afterwards. The copyright of Vyse’s “ Spelling Book ” alone sold for £2,500, with an annuity of fifty guineas to the author. The “ King of the Booksellers ” is apparently associated with “ Peter Pindar’s ” epigram on the publishers’ hypothetical habit of drinking out of authors’ skulls ; for, when John Wolcot made his name by the vast circulation of his early pieces, Robinson, in partnership with

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

another bookseller named Walker, negotiated with him both for his published, and, on certain conditions, for his unpublished works. While this treaty was pending, according to Timperley, the ingenious doctor developed an attack of asthma, which was always at its most distressing stage whenever the publishers were present. Anticipating his early death—though he was then only fifty-seven—they agreed to pay him an annuity of £250 instead of a lump sum down :

Soon after the bond was signed the doctor went to Cornwall, where he recovered his health, and returned to London without any cough, which was far from being a pleasing sight to the persons who had to pay his annuity. One day he called upon Mr. Walker, the manager for the parties, who, surveying him with a scrutinising eye, asked him how he did. "Much better, thank you," said Wolcot, "I have taken measure of my asthma ; the fellow is troublesome, but I know his strength, and am his master." "Oh !" said Mr. Walker gravely, and turned into an adjoining room, where Mrs. Walker, a prudent woman, had been listening to the conversation. Wolcot, aware of the feeling, paid a keen attention to the husband and wife, and heard the latter exclaim, "There now, didn't I tell you he wouldn't die ? Fool that you've been ! I knew he wouldn't die."

A plea was then set up that the agreement extended to all future pieces, as well as to those of the past ; and on this ground an action was commenced, which in a short time was compromised. Wolcot enjoyed the joke, and outlived both parties. The story gives a special piquancy to Peter Pindar's ode :

Muse, we have finish'd now our odes,  
And verily the songs of gods ;  
But let me tell thee, Muse, and much it pains,  
That these great traffickers in *words*,  
Those high and mighty pompous lords,  
The booksellers, will hardly barely give me *grains* !  
" *Hogs' wash* is good enough"—they cry :  
Thus can I neither roast nor fry.  
'Tis hard that my poor mental mill  
Is never suffered to lie still ;

## CAMPBELL'S TOAST

Such, such indeed the avarice of the clan :  
Forc'd, every minute of the hour,  
To grind, forsooth, for them the *flour*,  
And feed myself, alas ! upon the bran.

Hard is their bridle—Lord ! with pains I shrink ;  
Too hard upon my bleeding jaws they pull !  
What shame that they, the lazy imps, should drink  
Claret and Burgundy from my poor skull ;  
And, with a saucy, satisfying sneer,  
Bid me be happy upon dead small beer.

I boast *one* consolation, I allow—  
My name will never be forgotten :  
When to Posterity I make my bow,  
Those rogues are in oblivion rotten.

Elsewhere Peter Pindar remarks, in the "Island of Innocence" :

I've fought with lions, monkeys, bulls and bears,  
And got half Noah's Ark about my ears :  
Nay *worse* (which all the courts of justice know)  
Fought with the *brutes* of Paternoster Row.

Wolcot was not more rabid in his views of the Great Trade than his Scottish contemporary, the poet Campbell, who once drank Napoleon's health because he had ordered a bookseller to be shot ! The booksellers, he complains bitterly to Scott, are "ravens, croakers, suckers of innocent blood and living men's brains" ; but Campbell's words are a malicious libel on his own publishers, for, almost invariably, they treated him not only justly, but generously. The cause of the trouble—by no means rare when we come to analyse such cases—was that he rated his works far higher than their market value. In the present instance he had demanded £1,000 for his "Specimens of the British Poets," and the publishers told him that they could not afford so much. Scott, though he knew how to criticise the trade, took a saner, and, consequently, more lenient view of what he once described as "the most ticklish and unsafe and hazardous of all professions, scarcely with the exception



## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

of horse-jockeyship." In another letter, addressed to Miss Seward in 1807, mainly on the subject of Southey's "Madoc" and the terms which he had made for it with his publishers, Scott writes :

As to the division of the profits, I only think that Southey does not understand the gentlemen of *the trade*, emphatically so called, as well as I do. Without any greater degree of *fourberie* than they conceive the long practice of their brethren has rendered matter of prescriptive right, they contrive to clip the author's proportion of profits down to a mere trifle. It is the tale of the fox that went a-hunting with the lion, upon condition of equal division of the spoil; and yet I do not quite blame the booksellers, when I consider the very singular nature of their *mystery*. A butcher generally understands something of black cattle, and wo betide the jockey who should presume to exercise his profession without a competent knowledge of horse-flesh. But who ever heard of a bookseller pretending to understand the commodity in which he dealt? They are the only tradesmen in the world who professedly, and by choice, deal with what is called "a pig in a poke." When you consider the abominable trash which, by their sheer ignorance, is published every year, you will readily excuse them for the indemnification which they must necessarily obtain at the expense of authors of some value. In fact, though the account between an individual bookseller and such a man as Southey may be iniquitous enough, yet I apprehend, that upon the whole the account between *the trade* and the authors of Britain at large is pretty fairly balanced; and what these gentlemen gain at the expense of one class of writers, is lavished, in many cases, in bringing forward other works of little value. I do not know, but this, upon the whole, is favourable to the cause of literature. A bookseller publishes twenty books, in hopes of hitting upon one good speculation, as a person buys a parcel of shares in a lottery, in hopes of gaining a prize. Thus the road is open to all, and if the successful candidate is a little fleeced, in order to form petty prizes to console the losing adventurers, still the cause of literature is benefited, since none is excluded from the privilege of a competition.

The last few sentences, at least, are as true to-day as when Scott wrote them more than a hundred years ago. The trade itself, however, if the fundamental problems remain, has made changes during the same

## CO-OPERATIVE PUBLISHING

period. The sale dinner and the Chapter Coffee House were still flourishing at the beginning of the nineteenth century, as well as the custom of sharing in the production of the more important works. These were sometimes divided into as many as 100 or even 200 shares, which were often sold by auction. Early in the nineteenth century, for example, there was a sale of nearly 1,000 shares of the kind, one 26th "Tom Jones" fetching £8; one 100th Johnson's "Lives of the Poets" £11; one 160th Johnson's "Dictionary" £5, and so on. Increasing competition gradually brought this custom into disuse, though it lingered for many years, the last conspicuous instance of partnership publication being Dr. Latham's edition of Johnson's "Dictionary," which appeared in 1866.\*

But though some of these co-operative and pleasant social conditions survived the eighteenth century, the golden age of bookselling was already passing. Competition increased every year. While the record of new books in the first half of the eighteenth century—not a complete record, be it added, but near enough to illustrate our point—yielded an average of but 93 a year, the annual output during the first twenty-five years of the nineteenth century increased almost to 600—a modest total, it is true, when compared with the 8,446 new books, to say nothing of the 2,279 new editions, recorded in the "English Catalogue" for 1909, but sufficient to introduce increasing stress of competition. There was a tragic reminder of this in 1814 when William Nelson Gardiner, a Pall Mall bookseller and engraver who had taken his degree of B.A. at Cambridge, committed suicide, leaving a letter declaring that his sun was set

\* The partners were: Longmans, Green & Co., W. Allen & Co., Aylott & Son, Bickers & Son, W. & J. Boone, L. Booth, T. Bosworth, E. Bumpus, S. Capes, J. Cornish, Hatchard & Co., J. Hearne, E. Hodgson, Houlston & Wright, J. Murray, D. Nutt, Richardson & Co., J. & F. H. Rivington, Smith, Elder & Co., Stevens & Sons, Whittaker & Co., Willis & Sotheran, G. R. Wright. Edinburgh: MacLachlan & Stewart.

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

for ever—that his business had nearly declined—his catalogue failed—his body covered with disease—and that he had determined to seek the asylum “where the weary are at rest.” Gardiner’s downfall was doubtless largely of his own doing, for Timperley says that he was “a man of great eccentricity of conduct, regardless of all the forms of civilized life, both in his dress and deportment.”

A more noteworthy venture of the early nineteenth century was that of William Godwin, who, like a later apostle of revolt—Robert Buchanan—started to publish on his own account. In Godwin’s case the scheme was only intended for juvenile books, to include the works which Godwin himself had written under the name of Edward Baldwin. It was begun in 1805, and the prime mover in the business seems to have been his wife—not Mary Wollstonecraft, but her successor, Mrs. Clairmont—the “Mrs. Priscilla Pry” of Charles Lamb’s little sketch in the “New Times,” in 1825. Though there was never much love lost between the Lambs and Mrs. Godwin, it must not be forgotten, as Mr. E. V. Lucas observes in his delightful life of Lamb, “that had she not insisted upon becoming a publisher of books for children—to help out the precarious Godwin finances—those exquisite things, Charles Lamb’s story of ‘The Sea Voyage,’ and Mary Lamb’s story of ‘The Sailor Uncle’ (in ‘Mrs. Leicester’s School’) might have remained unwritten.” Their joint “Tales from Shakespeare” came from the same publisher in 1807, their “Poetry for Children” in 1807; and two years later they issued “Prince Doris,” the fairy-tale which Charles Lamb wrote in rhyme from the French. The Godwin venture lasted considerably longer than Buchanan’s, but with no greater measure of success in the end. Precaution was taken in the first place to omit Godwin’s name from the firm, lest this, with its taint of heterodoxy, should alone be sufficient to damn such an enterprise. An unpretentious start was made in Hanway Street, off

## GODWIN'S PUBLISHING VENTURE

Oxford Street, with a manager named Thomas Hodgkins to serve as a figure-head, and Lamb's first literary effort for children, the tiny picture book known as "The King and Queen of Hearts," must, says Mr. Lucas, have been among their earliest ventures. It was only in 1891, when the first copy came to light, that Lamb's share in the work was proved; and the value of the discovery was attested by the fact that this particular copy realised no less than £226. Its original price, in the collection known as the "Copperplate" series, was a shilling plain, and eighteenpence coloured. A second copy subsequently fetched £240. For a time the publishing business showed some signs of proving successful, and by 1809 Mrs. Godwin, putting her own name to her publications, had moved with the whole concern, together with Godwin's strangely assorted family, to roomier quarters at 41 Skinner Street, Snow Hill. Here they were living when Shelley first addressed his impetuous letter to Godwin in 1812, to be followed by his elopement with Mary Godwin, and their subsequent marriage. Godwin himself, rarely free from financial embarrassments during all these years, and not above extorting money from his generous if unconventional son-in-law, received little help from the publishing business in its later years, and in 1822 became bankrupt. It is interesting to find the name of John Murray as a subscriber of £10 towards the fund which was then raised, thanks largely to Charles Lamb, in the unsuccessful effort to set the worn-out philosopher on his feet again.

Other publishers, besides Godwin, had reason to be grateful to Charles Lamb, for though "Elia" railed against the trade at large, he was singularly kind to certain of its members. There was William Hone, for instance, remembered now chiefly for his "Every-day Book," and other miscellanies of the kind, but known in the early nineteenth century as the bookseller-satirist of the Regent. He had the political outspokenness without the inconstancy of the more celebrated book-



## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

seller-agitator, William Cobbett, who returned from America—where he had been a bookseller and publisher on the loyalist side, first at Philadelphia, and afterwards at New York—about the time that Hone was starting his own chequered career in Lambeth Walk. This was in the year 1800, after which Hone made many moves, but never a success. His trial, in 1817, for writing and publishing squibs against the Government and the Church made him a popular hero at the time, and led to a subscription for his benefit which amounted to over £3,000. His best known production was "The Political House that Jack Built," which ran to over fifty editions, and, like many of his other satires, was illustrated by his friend Cruikshank. It was in his later years, when he had practically retired from controversial life, that he started his weekly miscellany, the "Every-day Book," and made the acquaintance of Charles Lamb, to whom his rich store of antiquarian lore made a powerful appeal. The "Every-day Book" was not very successful; his debts increased until he was thrown into the King's Bench; and it was during his three years' imprisonment that he not only finished the first miscellany, but wrote and issued the "Table-Book." Hone found a good friend in Charles Lamb, to whom, as well as to Mary Lamb, he dedicated the "Every-day Book" when it appeared in volume form; and whose enthusiastic admirer he remained for the rest of his life. Lamb was prominent among the friends who tried to give Hone a fresh start in business on his release from the King's Bench, abandoning bookselling as hopeless in his case and setting him up at a coffee house in Gracechurch Street. But Hone was no more successful here than among his old books and newspapers, and struggled on mainly by the help of his pen, Thomas Tegg giving him £500 for his "Year Book,"\* and also buying the

\* Thomas Tegg, who made large sums by Hone's miscellanies, had his shop in Cheapside, and, as stated on p. 283, was among the most enterprising



## CHARLES LAMB AND EDWARD MOXON

copyright of his "Every-day Book." Hone finally came under the influence of Edward Irving, by whom he was converted, and his last public appearance was made as an occasional preacher at the Weigh-House Chapel, Eastcheap. Cruikshank and Dickens attended his funeral in 1842.

The publisher who owed the deepest debt of gratitude to Charles Lamb was Edward Moxon, whose house in Dover Street became one of the literary landmarks of London. There are points of strong resemblance between Edward Moxon and Robert Dodsley. Both had volumes of their own verse published before they set up in business for themselves, making a point in each case of their humble origin—Moxon issued his first book, "The Prospect, and other Poems," in 1826, while learning his business at Longmans', as the work of "a very young man, unlettered and self-taught"—and each was helped to a shop of his own by the generosity of an elder poet. "Elia" took an interest in Moxon when the future publisher was still at Longmans', who, in 1808, had issued Lamb's "Specimens of English Dramatic Poets." "Moxon is but a tradesman in the bud yet," he writes in a characteristic letter introducing him to Wordsworth in 1826, "and retains his virgin honesty." Lamb, with all his loveliness, could be very severe on the publishers. "For my part," he says in the same letter, "the failure of a Bookseller is not the most unpalatable accident of mortality :

Sad, but not the saddest,  
The desolation of a hostile city.

of the cheap booksellers in the first half of the nineteenth century. In his early career he had travelled as a bookseller with an auction license, and his nightly book auctions when he settled down in Cheapside were immensely popular. After Trafalgar he sold 50,000 copies at sixpence each of "The Whole Life of Nelson," which he rushed through the press at a few hours' notice. On his death in 1845 he was succeeded by his son William Tegg, who was more sedate in his methods, and was the author besides of various compilations of his own. William Tegg lived until 1895.

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

And one of his best known letters contains that grim warning to Bernard Barton against the literary life, which is worth repeating here :

Throw yourself on the world without any rational plan of support, beyond what the chance employ of booksellers would afford you !!!

Throw yourself rather, my dear sir, from the steep Tarpeian rock, slap-dash headlong upon iron spikes. If you had but five consolatory minutes between the desk and the bed, make much of them, and live a century in them, rather than turn slave to the booksellers. They are Turks and Tartars when they have poor authors at their beck. Hitherto you have been at arm's length from them. Come not within their grasp. I have known many authors want for bread, some repining, others envying the blessed security of a counting house, all agreeing they would rather have been tailors, weavers,—what not, rather than the things they were. I have known some starved, some to go mad, one dear friend literally dying in a workhouse. You know not what a rapacious, dishonest set these booksellers are. Ask even Southey, who (a single case almost) has made a fortune by book drudgery, what he has found them. Oh, you know not (may you never know !) the miseries of subsisting by authorship. 'Tis a pretty appendage to a situation like yours or mine ; but a slavery, worse than all slavery, to be a bookseller's dependant, to drudge your brains for pots of ale and breasts of mutton, to change your free thoughts and voluntary numbers for ungracious task-work. Those fellows hate *us*. The reason I take to be, that contrary to other trades, in which the master gets all the credit, (a jeweller or silversmith for instance,) and the journeyman, who really does the fine work, is in the back-ground,—in *our* work the world gives all the credit to us, whom *they* consider as *their* journeymen, and therefore do they hate us, and cheat us, and oppress us, and would wring the blood of us out, to put another sixpence in their mechanic pouches ! I contend that a bookseller has a *relative honesty* towards authors, not like his honesty to the rest of the world. Baldwin, who first engaged me as "Elia," has not paid me up yet, (nor any of us without repeated mortifying appeals,) yet how the knave fawned when I was of service to him ! Yet I dare say the fellow is punctual in settling his milk-score, &c.

Keep to your bank, and the bank will keep you. Trust not to the public ; you may hang, starve, drown yourself, for any thing that worthy *personage* cares. I bless every star that Providence, not seeing good to make me independent, has seen it next good to

## ADVICE FROM LAMB AND WORDSWORTH

settle me upon the stable foundation of Leadenhall. Sit down, good B. B., in the banking office. What ! is there not from six to eleven P.M. six days in the week, and is there not all Sunday ? Fie, what a superfluity of man's time, if you could think so !—enough for relaxation, mirth, converse, poetry, good thoughts, quiet thoughts. Oh the corroding, torturing, tormenting thoughts, that disturb the brain of the unlucky wight who must draw upon it for daily sustenance ! Henceforth I retract all my fond complaints of mercantile employment ; look upon them as lovers' quarrels. I was but half in earnest. Welcome dead timber of a desk, that makes me live. A little grumbling is a wholesome medicine for the spleen ; but in my inner heart do I approve and embrace this our close but unharassing way of life. I am quite serious. If you can send me Fox, I will not keep it *six weeks*, and will return it, with warm thanks to yourself and friend, without blot or dog's ear. You will much oblige me by this kindness.

Yours truly,  
C. LAMB.

[Wordsworth gave Moxon, whose volume of verse had been mentioned in Lamb's letter of introduction, very similar advice : " Fix your eye upon acquiring independence by an honourable business," he wrote, " and let the Muse come after, rather than go before." Samuel Rogers, to whom young Moxon had also been introduced by Lamb, and to whom he had dedicated his first volume of verse, was more practical in his advice, lending him the £500 with which he was presently established in a business of his own at 64 New Bond Street.\* That was in 1830, and the new publisher's first venture, appropriately, was Charles Lamb's " Album Verses," dedicated

\* Rogers started another poetaster in business in Thomas Miller, who was also patronised by Lady Blessington, and wrote a number of novels and children's books, as well as poems. He was granted a pension by Disraeli, and lived until 1874. Mr. Marston, in his reminiscences, writes : " I remember in his last days he used to boast most of the regularity with which he took his pipe and pot o' ale." There was an earlier bookseller of the name of Thomas Miller (1731-1804) who not only combined grocery with book-selling but formed a remarkable collection of Roman and English coins. It was his son William Miller who started publishing in Albemarle Street, where he was succeeded in 1812 by John Murray.

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

to Moxon himself, who had paid a similar compliment to Lamb in the previous year, in another of his own poems, entitled "Christmas." Rogers further proved his confidence in his *protégé* by entrusting him with the elaborate edition of his last book, "Italy," which cost its author £10,000 to produce. "Italy" was a failure, but Rogers subsequently recouped himself—and through the same publisher—with the sumptuous edition of his works, in two volumes, at a cost of £15,000, with illustrations by Turner and Stothard.

Three years after starting in business Moxon published Lamb's final book, "The Last Essays of Elia," though not without a good deal of opposition on the part of the original publisher, John Taylor, the head of the firm of Taylor and Hessey, in whose periodical, the "London Magazine," the Essays originally appeared. The "London Magazine" was first published by Baldwin, Cradock and Joy, under the editorship of John Scott, who was mortally wounded in the duel with John Gibson Lockhart's second, as a result of the squabble between "Blackwood" and the "London" magazine. After Scott's tragic death the new magazine was taken over by Taylor and Hessey, who possessed a sound reputation both in the trade and the literary world. "After the good old fashion of the Great Trade," says Talfourd, "these genial booksellers used to assemble their contributors round their hospitable table in Fleet Street," where De Quincy, on coming to London, "found an admiring welcome." The publishers took additional quarters, when they bought the magazine, at 13 Waterloo Place, and it was at the monthly dinners there that Charles Lamb met his friends and colleagues, Thomas Hood, the sub-editor of the magazine—John Taylor himself being misguided enough to assume the chief literary control—Bernard Barton, Cary, the translator of Dante, and, before his shameful career of crime, "Janus Weathercock," otherwise Thomas Griffiths Wainewright. Taylor and Hessey also deserve to be



## "WHEN BOOKSELLERS BREAK"

remembered for their generous treatment of Keats, whose first volume of "Poems," published by the brothers Ollier\* in 1817, had proved a dismal failure. The poet blamed his first publishers for inactivity, and they parted in anger. Taylor and Hessey not only undertook to publish "Endymion" before it was finished, but allowed Keats to draw upon them in advance. "Lamia and other Poems" followed in 1820, and in this, and in all their dealings with the poet, they behaved extremely well. John Taylor, though he proved an unsuccessful editor, was the first man to associate—in print, at all events—Sir Philip Francis with "Junius."

Lamb has not left a pleasant impression of the first publisher of his Essays, especially of Baldwin, the head of the firm, who seems to have been very backward in his payments. He had Baldwin most in his mind when he sent his warning letter to Bernard Barton; and mentions him again in the note, already quoted, introducing Moxon to Wordsworth: "When Constable fell from heaven, and we all hoped Baldwin was next, I turned a slight stave to the words in 'Macbeth' (D'Avenant's) to be sung by a chorus of authors:

What should we do when Booksellers break?  
We should rejoyce."

Scott, who suffered most by the financial crash of 1826, which led to the collapse of the three houses of Constable, Ballantyne, and Hurst and Robinson, and worked himself to death to clear off his debts, was more generous than Lamb. "While I live," he wrote to Lockhart, "I shall regret the downfall of Constable, for never did there exist so intelligent and so liberal an establishment. They went too far when money was

\* Charles and James Ollier published much of Shelley's work, and it was through Shelley that Keats was introduced to the firm. They also published for Leigh Hunt, through whom Charles Lamb issued with them the 1818 edition of his "Works"; but they never prospered, and a few years later the business was wound up, Charles Ollier, who was an author as well as a publisher, becoming literary adviser to Bentley.



## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

plenty, that is certain ; yet if every author in Britain had taxed himself half a year's income, he should have kept up the house which first broke in upon the monopoly of the London trade, and made letters what they now are." There is no need to re-tell the whole complicated story of the Edinburgh catastrophe which is touched upon sufficiently in our separate history of the great publishing houses. It may just be mentioned, however, that Robert Cadell, who had been a member of the house of Constable since 1811, dissolved partnership in the eventful year of 1826, and became Scott's publisher, and his partner in the re-purchase of the "Waverley" novels in the following year. He lived to make a fortune out of these golden copyrights, his finest edition being the illustrated Abbotsford Series, which cost him some £40,000 to produce. After his death the "Waverley" copyrights were bought by A. and C. Black (*see* p. 387).

Lamb did not cry out against the booksellers without reason. In the correspondence connected with the litigation over the "Last Essays of Elia," in which Moxon successfully resisted the copyright claim of John Taylor, the author mentioned that he should have received £30 profit out of the publication of the first Essays when they appeared in volume form, but that he never received the money. For two years the Essays in their magazine form, so "Elia" told Moxon, brought him £170.

Lamb presently owed a bigger grudge to his own pet publisher, for the young and susceptible Moxon found other attractions at the Lambs than the brother and sister who had taken such a kindly interest in him. Emma Isola, their adopted daughter, was wooed and won by their bookseller friend not long after he had moved to Dover Street, and Charles Lamb finds it hard to crack his jokes at the thought of losing her, 'my old and only walk-companion,' whose mirthful spirits were the 'youth of our house.' Yet in his unselfish heart he was truly glad, for he told Crabb Robinson before this happened



## PATERNOSTER ROW, LOOKING WEST

*View, taken on a Sunday, showing, on the left, the houses of Longmans' and Blackwood's, with the Oxford University Press at Amen Corner. On the right are Hutchinson's and Nelson's, Pitman's being beyond, facing the Oxford University Press. Photographed by W. J. Roberts*



## MOXON MARRIES EMMA ISOLA

that he wanted "to see her well married, great as the loss would be to him." So he puts on a brave face and sends several charming letters to Moxon on the subject :

For God's sake [he writes on July 24, 1833, six days before the wedding] give Emma no more watches ; *one* has turned her head. She is arrogant and insulting. She said something very unpleasant to our old clock in the passage, as if he did not keep time, and yet he had made her no appointment. She takes it out every instant to look at the moment hand. She lugs us out into the fields, because there the bird-boys ask you, "Pray, sir, can you tell us what's o'clock ?" and she answers them punctually. She loses all her time looking to see "what the time is." I overheard her whispering, "Just so many hours, minutes, &c., to Tuesday ; I think St. George's goes too slow." This little present of Time ! —why, 'tis Eternity to her ! What can make her so fond of a gingerbread watch ?

She has spoiled some of the movements. Between ourselves she has kissed away "half-past twelve," which I suppose to be the canonical hour in Hanover Square. Well, if "love me, love my watch" answers, she will keep time to you. It goes right by the Horse Guards.

DEAREST M.,

Never mind opposite nonsense. She does not love you for the watch, but the watch for you. I will be at the wedding, and keep the 30th July, as long as my poor months last me, as a festival, gloriously.

Yours, ever,  
ELIA.

We have not heard from Cambridge. I will write the moment we do.

Edmonton, 24th July, twenty minutes past three by Emma's watch.

Mary Lamb, says Talfourd in printing these letters, was in her sad state of mental estrangement up to the day of the wedding ; but then in the constant companionship of her brother at Edmonton. The following letters to the new-married pair—the first from Charles, introducing one from Mary—shows the happy effect of the news on her mental health :

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

DEAR MR. AND MRS. MOXON,

Time very short. I wrote to Miss Fryer, and had the sweetest letter about you, Emma, that ever friendship dictated. "I am full of good wishes, I am crying with good wishes," she says; but you shall see it.

DEAR MOXON,

I take your writing most kindly, and shall most kindly your writing from Paris.

I want to crowd another letter to Miss Fryer into the little time after dinner, before post time. So with twenty thousand congratulations,

Yours,  
C. L.

I am calm, sober, happy. Turn over for the reason. I got home from Dover Street, by Evans, *half as sober as a judge*. I am turning over a new leaf, as I hope you will now.

The turn of the leaf presented the following from Mary Lamb:

MY DEAR EMMA AND EDWARD MOXON,

Accept my sincere congratulations, and imagine more good wishes than my weak nerves will let me put into good set words. The dreary blank of *unanswered questions* which I ventured to ask in vain, was cleared up on the wedding day by Mrs. W. taking a glass of wine, and, with a total change of countenance, begging leave to drink Mr. and Mrs. Moxon's good health. It restored me from that moment, as if by an electrical stroke, to the entire possession of my senses. I never felt so calm and quiet after a similar illness as I do now. I feel as if all tears were wiped from my eyes, and all care from my heart.

MARY LAMB.

At the foot of this letter is the following by Charles:

DEARS, AGAIN,

Wednesday.

Your letter interrupted a seventh game at piquet which *we* were having, after walking to Wright's and purchasing shoes. We pass our time in cards, walks, and reading. We attack Tasso soon.

C. L.

Never was such a calm, or such a recovery. 'Tis her own words, undictated.



## TENNYSON AND BROWNING

Charles Lamb only lived to the end of the following year, murmuring the name of Moxon, among other friends remembered at the last. He left his books to the publisher, and on the death of his sister, with whom Moxon and his wife kept in touch till her death in 1847, Mrs. Moxon became her residuary legatee. Moxon himself continued his successful career at Dover Street, where much of the best poetry of the nineteenth century first saw the light. He had long been publisher to Wordsworth, who transferred all his works to him in 1836, and accompanied him to Paris in 1837. He also visited him at Rydal Mount in 1846. Tennyson, whose earliest verse, in "Poems by two Brothers," was first published in Louth, by J. and J. Jackson—with Simpkin and Marshall as their London agents\*—took his 1833 volume of "Poems" to Moxon, and remained faithful to him until the publisher's death. He transferred his works to Alexander Strahan in 1868, and subsequently to Messrs. Macmillan. Browning, who became associated with Moxon eight years after Tennyson, did not stay with him so long. His first completed work, "Pauline," had been published anonymously in 1833 at the expense of his aunt Mrs. Silverthorne; and had attracted no attention whatever, save through W. J. Fox, who gave it an enthusiastic review in the "Monthly Repository," and helped the poet to find a publisher—Effingham Wilson—for his next book, "Paracelsus." It was with "Sordello," which followed in 1840, that Browning began his connexion with Moxon. The poet was still without honour in his country—neglected by the reading public and scoffed at by the critics. Moxon now suggested that Browning should issue his poems in pamphlet form, at a cost which should not exceed twelve or fifteen pounds

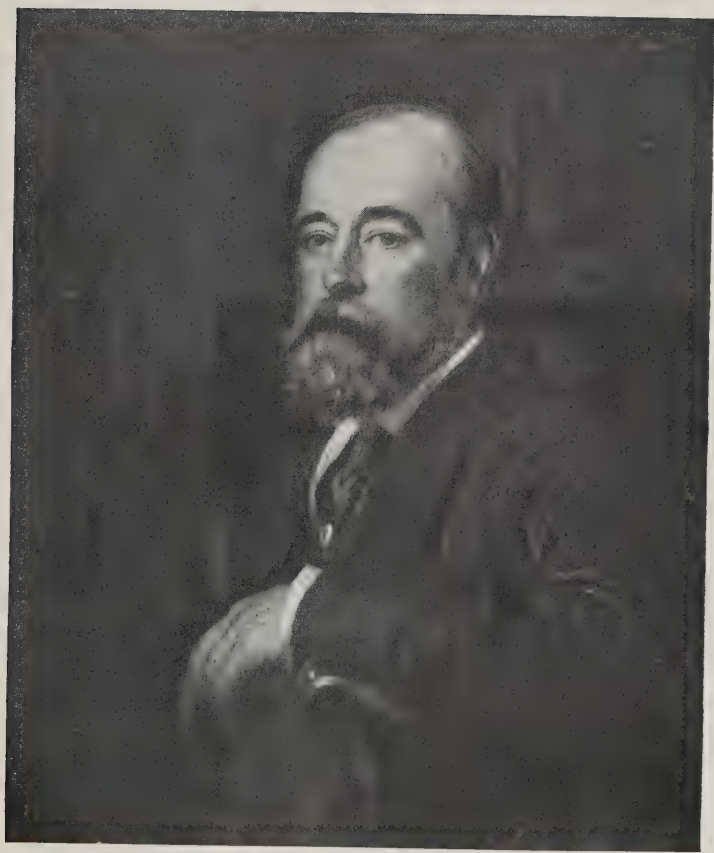
\* Simpkin, Marshall and Co. are still considerable publishers, in addition to being the largest wholesale booksellers in England, if not in the world. Among their novelists have been Miss Braddon and Helen Mathers. One of the directors is Mr. Joseph Shaylor, whose love of books is shown in several successful anthologies, and whose long list of writings on the history of his trade will be found in the bibliography at the end of our volume,

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

each; and Browning agreed, the "Bells and Pomegranates" appearing in this form, in a series of eight numbers, beginning with "Pippa Passes," and extending from 1841 to 1846. In his life of Browning in the "Dictionary of National Biography" Mr. Gosse quotes from a letter, hitherto unpublished, in which the poet gives an interesting account of his business relations with Moxon: "He printed, on nine occasions, nine poems of mine, wholly at my expense: that is, he printed them and, subtracting the very moderate returns, sent me in duly, the bill of the remainder of expense. . . . Moxon was kind and civil, made no profit by me, I am sure, and never tried to help me to any, he would have assured you." Moxon also published "The Statue and the Bust," but when Browning offered him the collected edition of his works in 1848—on the understanding that it was to be issued at the publisher's risk—he declined; upon which Browning went over to Dickens's publishers, Chapman and Hall, who accepted the proposal. Twenty years later Smith and Elder became Browning's publishers, and have ever since been closely associated with his works, the poet forming an intimate friendship with the late George Smith which closed only with his death. Moxon's other authors included Southey, Barry Cornwall and Monckton Milnes. He was also associated with Benjamin Disraeli, publishing his "Revolutionary Epick" in 1834, and even receiving an offer from that pushful genius—then thirty years old—to be taken into partnership, an offer which the level-headed Moxon declined, "not thinking," as he told Greville in 1847, "that he was prudent enough to be trusted."\*

Moxon died in 1858, after issuing Hogg's life of Shelley, and Trelawney's "Records of Shelley, Byron and the Author," in the same year. In his later career, when poetry had lost its hold on the reading public, he developed a department for what has been called the "household stuff" of literature, among his more notable

\* Disraeli's first books were published by Colburn. See p. 315.



GEORGE SMITH [1824-1901]

*From the picture painted by G. F. Watts, R.A., in 1876*



## “HOUSEHOLD STUFF”

ventures being Haydn's "Dictionary of Dates." Every publisher knows the value of good "household stuff" of this description. A text-book that once gets hold ; or, better still, a standard cookery book, is worth far more, from the merely mercantile point of view, than the most popular novel of the year. A good story, now printed for the first time, is told at Longmans' of a lady who called there in the early forties of last century and offered the publisher a sheaf of poetry. "My dear Madam," said the reigning head of the house, Thomas Longman IV., "it is no good bringing me poetry ; nobody wants poetry now. Bring me a cookery book, and we might come to terms." He spoke more in jest than in earnest, but Eliza Acton—for that was the lady—took him at his word, and in due course returned with her "Modern Cookery," which was first published in 1845, and, brought up to date at various periods, has been selling merrily ever since. On the strength of this success the publisher gratified his author's vanity by publishing a volume of her poetry, but while the cookery book went steadily through edition after edition the verses fell practically unheeded from the press. The publisher had gauged the public taste exactly. "Beeton's," first published in 1861, is another cookery book which must have been a gold-mine in itself. In this case it was the publisher's wife who was the successful author, the original publisher being S. O. Beeton, whose business in Fleet Street was afterwards taken over by Ward and Lock. Ward, Lock and Co., as the firm is now styled, also bought many of the copyrights of Edward Moxon and William Tegg, son of Thomas Tegg, when, in due course, these found their way into the market.

Piccadilly was one of the highways of the book trade long before Moxon and Murray settled in its neighbourhood. John Hatchard started business there in 1797, almost next door to Wright's shop, where the "Anti-Jacobin" was published, and where Wolcot took his revenge on Gifford, the editor, for his insulting "Epistle



## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

to Peter Pindar," striking him on the head with a stick, and being himself thrown into the gutter for his pains. It was at Wright's, too, that the "Intercepted Letters" of Bonaparte made their sensational appearance. Hatchard's became a fashionable meeting-place for booklovers and politicians soon after it was started. Here Isaac Disraeli was introduced to the much-abused Laureate, Pye, as described by Disraeli:

In those days when literary clubs did not exist, and when even political ones were very limited and exclusive in their character, the booksellers' shops were social rendezvous. Debrett's\* was the chief haunt of the Whigs, Hatchard's, I believe, of the Tories. It was at the latter house that my father made the acquaintance of Mr. Pye, then publishing his translation of Aristotle's "Poetics," and so strong was party feeling at that period, that one day walking together down Piccadilly, Mr. Pye, stopping at the door of Debrett, requested his companion to join, adding that if he (Pye) had the audacity to enter more than one person would tread upon his toes.

Hatchard's, like the rival shops, dealt largely in pamphlets, for the vogue of that class of literature had not yet given way before the rising tide of newspapers and magazines. Nearly all Canning's publications in this form bore Hatchard's name, and many notable books of the day were published by the same house. The founder had a reputation for piety which leaned towards the Low Church School, and brought him the useful patronage of the Clapham Sect—Wilberforce, Zachary Macaulay, and Henry Thornton—

\* John Debrett had succeeded John Almon, the bookseller and journalist, who gave loyal support to the Whigs while in opposition, and the close confidant of Wilkes, who had reason for calling him his "friend, and an honest worthy bookseller." He compiled, among other works, "The Remembrancer: a monthly collection of Papers relating to American Independence," and "The Correspondence of Wilkes and his Friends," in five volumes (1805). He also published "The New Peerage" (1754) in three volumes, but this was apparently not his own work. Debrett improved upon it with his own "Peerage of England, Scotland and Ireland," which made its first appearance in two volumes in 1802. His "Baronetage" followed six years later.

## MARTIN TUPPER'S AMAZING SALES

among whom circulated the "Christian Observer," of which he had become publisher. Young Macaulay did his precocious book-buying here, as described by his nephew and biographer, and Hannah More, who took such an interest in his intellectual welfare, and whose greatest ambition as a girl was to go to London to see Bishops and booksellers, also made Hatchard her publisher. Mr. A. L. Humphreys—now one of the partners in the firm, and the "Arthur Pendennis" of the smart little periodical "Books of To-day and Books of To-morrow," which he issues in connexion with it—has collected most of these anecdotes in his entertaining memorials of the house of Hatchard,\* in which he also mentions that when Gladstone, "then a young man of unblemished character," published his book on "Defence of the Church" in 1838, "Hatchard's name was considered to convey such weight as a Church house that the imprint of 187 Piccadilly appeared alongside that of Murray. In later years, when a young and exuberant author offered Hatchard a child's book containing the lines—

The animals went in one by one,  
Dash it, says Noah, they'll never be done,

he scornfully rejected the book and pointed triumphantly to his catalogue with its array of Trimmers, Sherwoods, and Hannah Mores." More successful than any of these was the "Proverbial Philosophy" of Martin Tupper, which had one of the most amazing sales of the nineteenth century, the first of the four series running through no fewer than sixty editions. Tupper's first volume, "Sacra Poesis," was published by Nisbet in 1832, and a hundred years hence, says the complacent author in his autobiography, "may be a treasure to some bibliomaniac." We have not heard yet, however, that any collector counts this booklet among his proudest possessions. Tupper's "chief authorial work," as he describes

\* "Piccadilly Bookmen," 1893.

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

his best-known volume of platitudes, began its appearance in serial form through Joseph Rickerby, in 1838, who issued his volume of "Geraldine and other Poems" in the same year; but Tupper left him as "an unfruitful publisher" and began his connexion with Hatchard—"with whom," he writes, "I had a long and prosperous career, receiving annually from £500 to £800 a year, and in the aggregate benefiting both—for we shared equally—by something like £10,000 apiece. When that good old man, Grandfather Hatchard," he writes with the unctuous vanity which makes it impossible to read his autobiography with patience, "first saw me he placed his hands on my dark hair and said with tears in his eyes, 'You will thank God for this book when your head comes to be as white as mine.' Let me gratefully acknowledge that he was a true prophet." Things did not work so smoothly after "Grandfather Hatchard's" death, and Tupper went over to Moxon's, where his third series was published. This, however, was not a financial success, so the fourth series went to Ward and Lock, with better result, though Tupper's popularity was now on the wane; and when Cassell presently produced the complete edition of the work in one volume it had to be remaindered.

Fortunately John Hatchard's association with poets was not confined to Pye and Tupper. It is strange to meet in such company the "meekest of mankind," George Crabbe, "nature's sternest painter, but her best." Crabbe's connexion with Hatchard began after the death of his earlier publisher and friend, James Dodsley, to whom he had been introduced by his generous patron Burke. His first venture from the new address was "The Parish Register," which appeared in 1807, bound up with "Sir Eustace Grey," "The Birth of Flattery" and other minor pieces, and its success, writes the poet's son and biographer, "was not only decided, but nearly unprecedented." This immediate success was in no small measure due to Jeffrey's generous tribute in the "Edinburgh," the whole of the first edition being

## CRABBE'S THREE THOUSAND POUNDS

sold off within two days of the appearance of that review. Individual criticisms then had much more power to make or mar the success of a book than at the present day, when the literary influence of the press is scattered over so wide and crowded a field. The net result may be the same—and there were never so many publishers, editors, and critics ready and willing to welcome good work as at the present time—but it is extremely difficult nowadays to trace the direct results of particular reviews.

"The Borough" also came from Hatchard (in 1810), and reached its sixth edition in as many years. Crabbe's last volume was published in 1819 by John Murray II., by whose advice the original title of "Remembrances" was changed to "Tales of the Hall." Murray paid for this collection, and for the remaining copyright of Crabbe's earlier poems, the handsome sum of £3,000. The poet's joy on receiving such an unexpected mine of wealth is well told in Thomas Moore's letter to the publisher, which will be found incorporated in our brief historical sketch of the house of Murray. Crabbe, and Hannah More, and the crowd of other worthies of "Grandfather Hatchard's" time would stare in wonder and amazement could they return to the Hatchard's of to-day, twice removed from its original home at 173, and modernised out of all recognition; yet carrying on the best traditions of bygone days without any of their narrowness of outlook on life and letters.



OBVERSE AND REVERSE OF ONE OF THE  
TRADING TOKENS ISSUED BY JAMES LACK-  
INGTON AT THE "TEMPLE OF THE MUSES"

## CHAPTER TWELVE : THE LAST HALF-CENTURY

THE first Hatchard started in business with a capital of £5. Bernard Quaritch, who laid the foundation of an equally famous house, set up with just twice that amount, saved from the salary of twenty-four shillings a week which he earned while serving in Bohn's bookshop off Covent Garden. If Quaritch's funds were low his ambitions were high, and his spirits undaunted. The story is told that when Bohn asked him where he was going he told him frankly that he meant to set up in opposition to his old employer. Bohn laughed. "Don't you know that I am the first bookseller in England?" he said. "Yes," came the reply, "but I am going to be the first bookseller in Europe"—a vow which, whether uttered or not, was literally fulfilled. Taking out naturalisation papers in 1847—for he was a native of Prussian Saxony—he made his modest beginning in the same year with a little corner shop in Castle Street, Leicester Square. Thirteen years later he was able to move to No. 15 Piccadilly, where he reigned as the prince of antiquarian booksellers until his death in 1900. No mention of Quaritch is complete without some reference to his share in the adventures of FitzGerald's version of Omar. FitzGerald handed over his translation in the first place to Parker of the Strand, who had asked him for something for "Fraser," but, as he made no use of it for over a year, FitzGerald took it back and published it at his own expense in 1859 through Quaritch, as a slim quarto in brown paper. Every one knows the familiar story of how Quaritch, finding that no one would pay a shilling each for the remainders of which FitzGerald made him a present, dumped them into the outside box at a penny apiece; and how they were discovered there by Rossetti, and his friends. That was before the move to Piccadilly, where Quaritch's house





BERNARD QUARITCH [1819-1900]  
*Photographed by Martin and Sallnow*



## THE HOUSE OF SOTHERAN

remained one of the literary landmarks of London until its removal to the more sumptuous home not far away, in Grafton Street, where Bernard Quaritch the second now reigns in his father's stead.

Another literary landmark in Piccadilly that has just shifted its position is that of the West-End house of Henry Sotheran and Co., who have moved from 37 to 43, opposite Prince's Hall. Thomas Sotheran, the founder, belonged to an old family of booksellers in York, but, after serving his apprenticeship there, left for the larger world of London, serving for a time with the Quaker booksellers of Cornhill, John and Arthur Arch. In 1812 he made a start for himself in Old Broad Street, but it was not until he was joined in partnership by his son Henry in 1841 that the firm assumed its leading position in the trade. The Strand business of E. C. Stibbs was bought up in 1853, and three years later a new partner was found in George Willis, whose considerable stock soon brought up their total number of volumes to about half a million, with a catalogue which ran to over 600 pages. Henry Sotheran subsequently became sole proprietor by the purchase of Willis's share. At one time the firm had four large shops in London, but gradually concentrated the business in its two houses in the Strand and Piccadilly, and became Bookseller and Publisher to the King. The Tower Street branch, after being transferred to Queen Street, Cheapside, was taken over by Mr. E. Jones, and is now conducted by the well-known firm of Jones and Evans. Sotheran's most important publishing venture has been in connexion with the ornithological and other works of John Gould, which were taken over in 1881, but they have issued many other works on antiquarian subjects and art, as well as in natural history. Henry Sotheran, who retired in 1893, died twelve years later, the present head of the house being his son, Mr. Henry Cecil Sotheran.

The neighbouring house of Moxon, in Dover Street, survived its founder's death by a good many years, but

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

its more prosperous days were over. The chief interest attaching to its last phase is its association with Swinburne, beginning with his first book, containing the two plays, "The Queen Mother," and "Rosamund," published in 1860. This was originally issued by Pickering of Piccadilly, but it is said that the volume was withdrawn before the first twenty copies had been circulated, and transferred to Moxon, who immediately issued it with a new title-page. The little prose-story called "Dead Love," which came next, appeared originally in "Once a Week," and was brought out in book form by Messrs. Parker and Son. The volume has never been reprinted. A year later came Swinburne's first masterpiece, "Atalanta in Calydon." Here Moxon was again the publisher, and it is generally understood that he printed only a hundred copies of the book. Anyhow, a second edition had to be issued before the year was out, though there was nothing on the title-page to distinguish it from the first edition. The third edition did not appear before 1868, by which time Mr. Swinburne had deserted Moxon for John C. Hotten,\* whose successors, Messrs. Chatto and Windus, have acted as Mr. Swinburne's publishers ever since.

"Chastelard" was published by Moxon in 1865, and there were a few copies remaining in the following year, when the honour of being Swinburne's publisher fell to Hotten, who issued a second edition of "Chastelard" in 1868. The cause of the transfer was the publication by Moxon in 1866 of the first series of "Poems and Ballads," when the storm of abuse roused by certain of the contents so alarmed the Moxon firm that they only breathed freely again when they had washed their hands of the poet

\* Hotten also introduced many of the best-known works of American authors, among them Lowell's "Biglow Papers," Leland's "Hans Breitmann's Barty and other Ballads," Oliver Wendell Holmes's "Wit and Humour," "Artemus Ward, his Book," and Bret Harte's "Lothaw" and "Sensation Novels." He was himself a busy compiler, under various names, and also published several of his own translations of Erckmann-Chatrian's works. He died in 1873.

## THE CRADLE OF CHRISTIAN SOCIALISM

entirely. Hotten had to publish a second edition of "Poems and Ballads" before the end of that year, and to-day it has the largest sale of any of Swinburne's volumes. "Notes on Poems and Reviews," in 1866, and his "William Blake," were both published by Hotten in 1868. "Songs before Sunrise" (dedicated to Mazzini) found another publisher for the time being in F. S. Ellis,\* though this subsequently made its way, with the rest of Swinburne's works, to Messrs. Chatto and Windus.

The firm of Parker and Son, just mentioned as having published "Dead Love" in book form in 1866, was founded by John William Parker, for many years printer to Cambridge University. He had started in business in London at 445 Strand, first coming into prominence there in the forties, and issuing "Fraser's" among other magazines. Subsequently the firm became one of the pillars of the Broad Church party, and the cradle of the Christian Socialism of F. D. Maurice, Charles Kingsley and Thomas Hughes, all of whom were also associated in their writings with the Cambridge days of the House of Macmillan. It was J. W. Parker who issued the famous "Essays and Reviews" in 1860. On the death of J. W. Parker, jun., his father retired, and in 1863 the business was taken over by Longmans.

J. W. Parker is not to be confused with J. H. Parker and J. Parker, the well-known Oxford booksellers, who have distinguished associations both with Oxford and London stretching right back through the nineteenth century. The most notable achievement of this firm was the publication of Keble's "Christian Year," which, issued anonymously in 1827, went through 150 editions before it ran out of copyright. The Parkers

\* F. S. Ellis, who died in 1901, was a member of the well-known firm of booksellers of 29 New Bond Street, and closely associated with Rossetti, William Morris, and their circle. Bookselling has been carried on at No. 29 continuously since John Brindley started there in 1728, to become joint-publisher seven years later, as already mentioned, in the first book to be issued by Robert Dodsley from Tully's Head in Pall Mall—the second volume of Pope's "Works."



## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

were also for many years London agents for the Clarendon Press publications, but that part of the business, on the retirement of J. H. Parker in 1863, was taken over by Messrs. Macmillan, who held the appointment until the Oxford Press opened its present warehouse at Amen Corner. Macmillan also took over the business of Richard Bentley, whose name was once a household word to the fiction-reading public. Richard Bentley had started a printing concern early in the nineteenth century with his brother Samuel, and in 1829 was taken into partnership by Henry Colburn, whose publications, as mentioned on p. 161, had already included the *Diaries of Evelyn and Pepys*. In addition to publishing new books, Colburn not only ran a fashionable library in New Burlington Street, but speculated at different times in at least half a dozen periodicals, among them the "*New Monthly Magazine*," whose editors included Thomas Campbell, Bulwer Lytton, Theodore Hook, and Harrison Ainsworth. After three years' partnership Colburn sold his business in New Burlington Street to Bentley, who, equally enterprising in periodical speculations, started, among other ventures, "*Bentley's Miscellany*" (1837) with Charles Dickens as editor. "*Oliver Twist*" made its first appearance in the pages of this magazine, which was subsequently merged in "*Temple Bar*." Richard Bentley, who became Publisher in Ordinary to Queen Victoria, also dealt largely in fiction, making a big success of his library of "*Standard Novels*," which ran to 127 volumes. He was succeeded by his son, George Bentley, who edited "*Temple Bar*" until his own death in 1895, and "discovered," or helped very largely to introduce, such popular novelists as Wilkie Collins, Mrs. Henry Wood, Mrs. Riddell, Miss Rhoda Broughton, and Miss Marie Corelli. Henry Colburn meantime, repenting of the bargain which he had made with Bentley, to the effect that he would not start publishing again in London, or within twenty miles of it, had retreated to Windsor. The call of the metropolis,

## DAYS OF THE THREE-DECKER

however, was too much for him, and, sacrificing his guarantees, he made a fresh start in Great Marlborough Street. Here he rivalled Bentley in helping to fill the libraries with three-volume novels at a guinea and a half the set, and issuing, besides, such weightier works as Burke's "Peerage," "Baronetage" and "Landed Gentry"; and Strickland's "Lives of the Queens of England." This last was one of his most profitable ventures, though he paid £2,000 for the copyright, which, after his death, was sold again for no less than £6,900. Among the popular novelists who gathered round Colburn in those palmy days of the old three-decker were G. P. R. James, Captain Marryat, Lord Lytton, and Theodore Hook. Some of these authors published with him before his partnership with Bentley. Another celebrity associated with Colburn during the same period was Benjamin Disraeli, whose first novel, "Vivian Grey," he issued in 1826, his second tale, "The Young Duke," following in 1831. When Colburn retired he was succeeded by Hurst and Blackett, though he retained certain copyrights, which, after his death in 1855, realised £14,000—including the £6,900 for Strickland's "Lives."

The name of Routledge follows naturally upon that of Colburn, for the popular novelists of the one house were largely exploited by the other for the "Railway" and other libraries which, in the mid-nineteenth century, formed the bulk of W. H. Smith and Son's bookstall business. George Routledge founded his own firm on second-hand books and remainders at a little shop in Ryder's Court, Leicester Square. Then starting the "Railway Library" and moving to larger premises in Soho Square, he took into partnership his brother-in-law William Warne, and subsequently—on making a fresh move to Farringdon Street—Frederick Warne.\* The "Railway Library" and the still popular Universal

\* Frederick Warne, on the death of his brother and the dissolution of the partnership, established a new business which still has its address in

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

Library—which they circulated all over the country by their own travellers, as well as by means of Smith's book-stalls—were so successful that Routledge and Co. ventured in 1853 to offer Lord Lytton £20,000 for a ten years' right to issue cheap editions of his published works. It says much for their enterprise, as well as for Lord Lytton's contemporary popularity, that, at the end of the ten years, Routledge and Co. were ready to renew the contract. Most of the popular authors of the day were represented in one or other of these cheap series, and their circulations were enormous. The "Railway Library" eventually numbered over 1,000 volumes. Great things were also done on the Fine Art side, one of the best of their productions in this department being Howard Staunton's edition of Shakespeare, illustrated by Sir John Gilbert. George Routledge moved with his two sons, Robert and Edmund, to fresh quarters at Broadway, Ludgate Hill, but after the founder's death in 1888 the firm fell for a time on evil days. It has since renewed much of its youth and enterprise under the scholarly leadership of Mr. W. Swan Sonnenschein and Mr. Laurie Magnus.

The venerable firm of Rivington lost its proud title as the oldest in the trade when it merged its identity in the historic house of Longman in 1890. The publishers had long left the familiar sign in St. Paul's Churchyard—where, since 1833, they had strengthened their hold on the High Church party by publishing the "Tracts for the Times"—moving their whole business in 1853 to 3 Waterloo Place. For years they held the agency of the Cambridge University Press, and in 1863 branches of their own were opened both at Oxford and Cambridge; but these were closed three years later, when the business was concentrated at Waterloo Place—to pass in 1890, as already stated, into the hands of the Longmans. The old

Bedford Street, Strand. The firm of Frederick Warne and Co. is associated with the "Chandos Classics," the "Lansdowne" poets, Mrs. Hodgson Burnett's early books, and the familiar "Nuttall."

## “MUDIE’S”

name has since been revived in the comparatively new firm of Rivington and Co., in King Street, Covent Garden, originally founded under the name of Percival and Co., and afterwards joined by Mr. Septimus Rivington, the seventh son of the late Mr. Francis Rivington—sixth in descent from the Charles Rivington who founded the house in 1711.

Another firm—already half-forgotten—which takes us back to the days of the old three-decker, is that of the Tinsley Brothers, who started in 1854, which William Tinsley mentions in his “Random Recollections” as the beginning of the most profitable period during the nineteenth century for publishers of books for circulating libraries. Charles Edward Mudie was a stationer-book-seller, with a modest little shop in Southampton Row, before he started to lend books in 1842. The library grew with sound business methods and a sure perception of what the reading public wanted, and was soon sufficiently established to publish Lowell’s poems in England, and move into its first vast storehouse in New Oxford Street. Mudie’s guinea subscription for new books had enormously increased the demand for the three-volume novel by the time the Tinsleys were started, and the short-lived but suicidal opposition of the newer venture, the Library Company, Limited, which endeavoured to undermine Mudie’s with a half-guinea subscription for new books—and was hoist with its own petard, so to speak—led to a rivalry which created a boom in fiction that was too good to last. It was partly this competition, and the proportionate keenness of the other circulating libraries, which helped “Lady Audley’s Secret,” and many other popular works of the day, to phenomenal sales which have rarely been heard of since.\* According to William Tinsley, W. H. Smith and Son would not have ventured into the bookselling business had Mudie come

\* The old “three-decker” maintained its supremacy until 1894, when the circulating libraries refused to take any more in that form, thus bringing the size and price down at once to the six-shilling novel in one volume.



## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

to terms with them when they secured their contracts for selling books and newspapers at most of the principal railway stations in England. In one of the contracts there was a special stipulation that books should be lent, as well as sold, from the different stalls on that line. Smith and Son, apparently, had no desire to add that branch to their business, and offered Mudie a very large subscription for the loan of a certain number of books in order that they might fulfil this contract. "But Mr. Mudie was then in the full tide of his popular guinea subscription, and he refused Smith and Son's offer," little dreaming that very soon afterwards Messrs. Smith and Son would not only be lending books on that particular line, but on almost all the important railways in the kingdom. Mudie's library, however, continued to grow by leaps and bounds until it moved into the now familiar headquarters at New Oxford Street, and became almost as much a national institution as the neighbouring British Museum. Miss Braddon (Mrs. Maxwell, whose husband, John Maxwell, was an enterprising publisher in the journalistic and magazine world of the last half-century, starting "Belgravia" with his wife, among other things) published a number of her novels with the Tinsleys, apart from "Lady Audley's Secret," which ran through eight three-volume editions during its first three months. "Perhaps no book," says William Tinsley, "that was ever written had a more adventurous run for fortune than 'Lady's Audley's Secret.' It was begun as a serial in a little publication called 'Robin Goodfellow,' which had a short life, even though edited by Charles, afterwards Dr. Mackay. It was re-commenced as a serial in 'The Sixpenny Magazine' which, I think, died before the book was finished. It was announced to be published at two shillings, and a Mr. Skeet, a publisher in King William Street, Strand, ventured it in three volumes, before we gave Miss Braddon, I feel sure, a larger sum for it than she had dreamed of. After that we gave her five hundred pounds and other handsome presents, and then we had a



## TINSLEY'S AUTHORS

good profit on the book; and," he adds, "we also did very well out of 'Aurora Floyd.'" Among other popular novelists for whom the Tinsleys published were Wilkie Collins, James Payn, Mrs. Henry Wood, Rosa N. Carey, William Black, Sir Walter Besant, and George Augustus Sala, whose "Seven Sons of Mammon" was their first big undertaking in three-volume fiction. More interesting than any of these, from the literary point of view, though far less profitable to the publishers, were the early books which they published of George Meredith and Thomas Hardy. Meredith issued "Rhoda Fleming" with them, but it "had a very poor sale," says Tinsley. With two or three other exceptions, Meredith's novels were all published by Messrs. Chapman and Hall, as mentioned in our separate history of that house on p. 410.\* Mr. Hardy published his first novel, "Desperate Remedies," by the Tinsley Brothers in 1871. It appeared anonymously, and in three volumes. William Tinsley says that he accepted "Desperate Remedies" thinking that, in spite of the introduction of what he describes as "almost ultra-sensational matter," there was enough of the bright side of human nature in the book to sell at least one fair edition. "However, there was not; but for a first venture," he adds, "I do not think Mr. Hardy had much to complain about." The same publisher bought the copyright of Mr. Hardy's second novel, "Under the Greenwood Tree," and published it in the following year (1872), convinced that he had secured the best little prose idyll that he had ever read:

I almost raved about the book [he writes], and gave it away wholesale to Pressmen and any one I knew interested in good fiction. But, strange to say, it would not sell. Finding it hung

\* To-day the sole publishers of Meredith's works are Messrs. Constable and Co., a firm which, though bearing an historic name, and carrying on the best traditions of the trade, is of comparatively recent growth. One of the partners is Meredith's son, Mr. W. M. Meredith, the other directors being Mr. Otto Kyllmann and Mr. G. E. Nathan.

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

on hand in the original two-volume form, I printed it in a very pretty illustrated one-volume form. That edition was a failure. Then I published it in a two-shilling form, with paper covers, and that edition had a very poor sale indeed ; and yet it was one of the best Press-noticed books I ever published.

The Tinsleys tried Mr. Hardy's third novel, "A Pair of Blue Eyes," as a serial in "Tinsley's Magazine," and afterwards in three volumes (1873), but the immediate result was equally disappointing. Then, however, came the commission to write "Far From the Madding Crowd" for the "Cornhill"—the turning-point in Mr. Hardy's career, for at that time, according to Tinsley, it was by no means certain that he would not return to his profession as an architect. Literature, however, was steadily asserting her claim upon Mr. Hardy, though the wanderings of his books among the publishers were curiously unsettled. "Far From the Madding Crowd" ran serially through the "Cornhill" unsigned, and when Smith and Elder brought it out in three volumes in the same year (1874) its success was unqualified. Smith and Elder saw it through four editions before parting with it in 1882 to Messrs. Sampson Low, who, in their turn, had reprinted it at least half a dozen times when Osgood and M'Ilvaine took it over for their complete uniform edition of Mr. Hardy's works. It still has—with "Tess of the D'Urbervilles," which runs it very close in the matter of popularity—a far wider circulation than Mr. Hardy's other books, though all have a remarkably steady sale.

After "Far From the Madding Crowd"—to return to the novels—came "The Hand of Ethelberta: a Comedy in Chapters," which followed the course of its predecessor through the pages of the "Cornhill," and was subsequently published by Smith and Elder in two volumes. Though it did not meet with the striking success of "Far From the Madding Crowd," it was twice reprinted by the original publishers before Messrs. Sampson Low took it over in 1882—to part with it later, though only after four or five fresh editions had been

## THOMAS HARDY'S PUBLISHERS

exhausted, to Osgood, M'Ilvaine and Co. The next novel, "The Return of the Native" (1878), found it harder still to settle down permanently, running first through "Belgravia," then appearing in three volumes through Smith and Elder; next turning up in a new edition at Messrs. Kegan Paul's; then joining its fellows at Messrs. Sampson Low, and eventually finding its way to Harper's through Osgood, M'Ilvaine and Co. Meantime, the success of these later books was giving a fresh and wider circulation to Mr. Hardy's earlier novels. A new edition of "A Pair of Blue Eyes" was published in 1877 by H. S. King and Co. (to be presently taken over by Kegan Paul and Co., and by them transferred in 1884 to Sampson Low), while in 1878 Messrs. Chatto succeeded the Tinsleys as the publishers of "Under the Greenwood Tree" and brought it out in two new editions. "Under the Greenwood Tree" is still published by Messrs. Chatto, as well as in the complete edition of the novelist's works. "Desperate Remedies," the anonymous novel, did not make its reappearance under the author's name until 1889, when Ward and Downey brought it out in its first one-volume form. Three years later Mr. Heinemann reprinted it in a popular edition, and in 1896, when Osgood, M'Ilvaine and Co. included it in their uniform edition, the Wessex towns and other places mentioned were, in several of the stories, called for the first time by the names under which they appear elsewhere—"for the satisfaction," writes the author, "of any reader who may care for consistency in such matters." Mr. Hardy's seventh book was "The Trumpet-Major," published in three volumes by Smith and Elder in 1880 after running serially through "Good Words." A new and cheaper edition in one volume was brought out in the following year by Messrs. Sampson Low, who reprinted it several times before it passed into Osgood, M'Ilvaine and Co.'s complete edition in 1895. The eighth novel was "A Laodicean," which appeared originally in "Harper's Magazine," Messrs. Sampson Low bringing it out subsequently in three volumes (1881).

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

Next comes "Two on a Tower," which was published in three volumes in 1882 by Messrs. Sampson Low, after its production in serial form in the "Boston Monthly." Four years elapsed before Mr. Hardy's tenth novel, "The Mayor of Casterbridge," made its appearance, though his story of "The Romantic Adventures of a Milkmaid," which came out in the "Graphic" Summer Number in 1883, was reprinted in book form in America in 1884. "The Mayor of Casterbridge" was another "Graphic" story, Smith and Elder bringing it out in two volumes. That was in 1886; in the following year Messrs. Sampson Low published the book, and, after several reprints, it was taken over, like the rest of the Hardy novels, by Osgood, M'Ilvaine and Co. "The Woodlanders" came next, this time through Messrs. Macmillan, who published it in 1887 in three volumes, after seeing it through their magazine, and brought it out in one-volume form in the same year. Messrs. Macmillan were also the original publishers of "Wessex Tales" in two volumes (1888), though the stories had been making their appearance in various periodicals since 1879.

With "Tess" and his next collection of tales, "A Group of Noble Dames"—both issued in 1891—Messrs. Osgood, M'Ilvaine and Co. became Mr. Hardy's publishers, and when Harper and Brothers succeeded them they took over the Hardy connexion as their most valuable asset. The later novels and the two volumes of "Wessex Poems" (1898) and "Poems of the Past and the Present" (1901) came from the same address in Albemarle Street: but the whole of the works are now published, in their English editions, by Messrs. Macmillan, through whom came Mr. Hardy's last work, "The Dynasts: A Drama."

"Hardly anything in my publishing career troubled me more than parting with Mr. Thomas Hardy," writes Mr. Edward Marston, the *doyen* of his profession, and, until the last few years, head of the house of Sampson Low, Marston and Co., where most of the novelist's books were published before Mr. J. R. Osgood came

## PLEASURES OF A PUBLISHER'S LIFE

over to start the new publishing business in Albemarle Street. It was not without a remonstrance on the part of the older firm that Mr. Hardy transferred his books to Osgood, M'Ilvaine and Co., though in the letter quoted by Mr. Marston in his reminiscences, "After Work," he writes to his old publisher to hope that "the situation which has arisen, as it were by accident, may not interfere with our old-established friendship." No publisher, indeed, made more friends among his authors than did Mr. Edward Marston in the course of his sixty years' experience of the trade. "Surely one of the greatest pleasures of a Publisher's life," he writes, "is that of being on terms of intimacy and friendship with the authors with whom he has to deal: this helps to counterbalance the chagrins that weigh him down when books don't sell: for the old theory that publishers could not make any losses has long since exploded." If friendships could compensate for losses of this sort, Mr. Marston was happy indeed. R. D. Blackmore and William Black, Fred Burnaby and H. M. Stanley, and a host of other celebrities whose books he published, tell, in their own words, how deep was their personal attachment to him. "If ever an author has reason to speak well of his publisher," writes Mr. W. Clark Russell, in one of the most generous tributes that any publisher ever received from an author, "I am the man. From the beginning Mr. Marston honoured me by exhibiting confidence in my work. He took everything I sent him, much of which I am glad is forgotten, and in his correspondence I never failed to meet with the same encouraging note. I was delighted with the success of 'The Wreck of the Grosvenor,' quite as much for my dear old friend's sake as for my own. He again and again extended his hand, when most publishers, as I now understand them, would have turned their backs." The winning personality of the publisher comes out in his reminiscences together with his "transparent honesty and prevailing good-humour," as William Black once remarked. "The



## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

Amateur Angler" has written so many little books of his own that Sir Edwin Arnold once warned him that "if the great publishers turn authors, mind we don't take our revenge and turn publishers." His longest and closest friendship was with Blackmore, whose connexion began with "Lorna Doone" in 1869 and continued till his death in 1900. Blackmore's first novel, "Clara Vaughan," was published by Macmillan in 1864. The story of "Lorna Doone's" cold reception on its first edition, and its sudden success when reprinted three years later—largely because the reading public found the name akin to that of the English Princess who had lately become Marchioness of Lorne (now Duchess of Argyll) is one of the romances of the book world. "But for you," wrote Blackmore to Mr. Marston in 1879, "'Lorna Doone' might never have seen the light. All the magazines rejected her, and Smith and Elder refused to give £200 for the copyright." Mr. Marston tells some good stories of Charles Reade, Harrison Weir, Wilkie Collins, James Payn, Victor Hugo, Jules Verne, and many other authors with whom his house was associated, and gives two chapters to his intimate associations with H. M. Stanley. "I do not think it has often happened in the long story of English publishing from the earliest days till now," writes Mr. Marston with pardonable pride, "that the relations between author and publisher have been more congenial than those which subsisted uninterruptedly between Sir Henry M. Stanley and myself." And Stanley was a loyal friend. "I do not think that this absence," he wrote to his publisher on one of the expeditions through the heart of Africa, "to whatever period it might be stretched, will tarnish or lessen the friendship for you my memory cherishes," and subsequently, in connexion with the negotiations for his book, he declared: "I will tell you that if"—mentioning another publisher—"were to offer me £10,000 down I would not leave you!" Mr. Marston went to Egypt to meet the explorer on

## THE "P. C."

his return from "Darkest Africa," and made the arrangements for the publication of that work in all parts of the globe. He is also well known for his connexion—extending to fifty-eight years—with the "Publishers' Circular," now edited by his son, Mr. R. B. Marston. The "P. C.," as it is familiarly called in the trade, was established in the year in which Queen Victoria came to the throne, Mr. Sampson Low, who had started a book-shop and circulating library in Lamb's Conduit Street—then a more fashionable neighbourhood than at the present day—having been appointed to conduct it by a committee of leading London publishers. Subsequently Sampson Low sold his library and started the publishing business to which Mr. Edward Marston, who had joined the firm in 1846 and left to establish a profitable Australian connexion, returned as a partner in 1856. Nine years afterwards Sampson Low took over the "Publishers' Circular" as his own property, and was also associated with it as editor until 1883, three years before he died. Out of the "P. C." have grown the volumes of the "English Catalogue," which, as every bibliographer knows, are invaluable as a record of books published since the beginning of the Victorian era. The other trade publications, the "Bookseller" and the "Reference Catalogue of Current Literature," owe their origin in each case to Joseph Whitaker\* of "Almanack" fame, who in his early career acted for some years as London agent for J. H. and J. Parker of Oxford, and from 1856 to 1859 edited the "Gentleman's Magazine." He started the "Bookseller" as a monthly publication in 1858, and in the following year played a prominent part in a serious but unsuccessful effort to organise the trade against the ever-increasing

\* Not to be confused with George Byron Whittaker, whose firm was one of the largest in the publishing and wholesale bookselling trade during the first half of the nineteenth century. Among their copyrights were the "Bibliotheca Classica," now the property of George Bell and Sons, and works by Sir Walter Scott, Miss Mitford, and Mrs. Trollope.

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

evil of underselling. The cheapening booksellers had been the chief thorn in the sides of their more conservative brethren since the beginning of the century, when, as we have pointed out, they formed themselves into an independent body under the title of "Associated Booksellers"—or "Associated Busy Bees," as they came to be called from the device of the Beehive which they used in their books. How long this society lasted we have been unable to discover, but the first association of the protectionists appears to have been formed in 1812 and remodelled about 1828, when underselling, as ordinarily understood in the discount system of the nineteenth century—not the cheapening Remainder trade as practised by Lackington—first seriously threatened the well-being of the trade. The 1828 association was not much more effective than the earlier organisation, and it was not until the Booksellers' Association was established twenty years later, and a new "trade ticket" prepared in 1850, that war was formally declared against all booksellers who did not abide by its rules and regulations. Mr. Sampson Low, the editor of the "P. C.," was the secretary of the committee elected to manage the business, and so thoroughly was the work done while it lasted that the undersellers, or Free Traders, had to call for assistance. Public feeling was largely on the side of Free Trade, and nearly all the leading authors of the day, as well as the "Times," condemned the Protectionists in what they considered their arbitrary practice of keeping up prices. "My answer to this question, for my own interests, and for those of the world, so far as I can see them," wrote Carlyle, "is decidedly 'No' . . . and, indeed, I can see no issue, of any permanency, to this controversy that has now arisen, but absolute 'Free-trade' in all branches of Bookselling and Book-publishing." Dickens presided at a meeting of protest against restriction held in May 1852 at John Chapman's bookshop in the Strand, and declared himself, on principle, most strongly opposed to any system of exclusion, holding

## THE FIGHT FOR PROTECTION

that every man, whatever his calling, must be left to the fair and free exercise of his own honest thrift and enterprise. Mr. Gladstone, who declared that the state of the bookselling trade as then existing was a disgrace to civilisation, felt so strongly in the matter that he personally supplied certain of the nonconforming booksellers with his pamphlets on Italy, which his publisher, being a member of the Booksellers' Association, could not sell to them. In the face of all this influential opposition the Booksellers' Association appealed for an opinion from a board composed of Lord Campbell—it was seven years before he became Lord Chancellor—and two distinguished historians, George Grote and Dean Milman. In the deputation from the Booksellers' Association the chief spokesman was William Longman, himself an author, as well as a partner in the great publishing house, and his evidence went to prove that force, or coercion of some kind, would alone prevent one bookseller from underselling his neighbour. The arbitrators, however, decided against coercion of any sort. "Such regulations," said Lord Campbell, "seem *prima facie* to be indefensible, and contrary to the freedom which ought to prevail in commercial transactions. Although the owner of property may put what price he pleases upon it when selling it, the condition that the purchaser, after the property has been transferred to him, and he has paid the purchase money, shall not resell it under a certain price, derogates from the rights of ownership which, as purchaser, he has acquired." Thereupon the Booksellers' Association dissolved, and the effort made in 1859-60 to form a fresh society to safeguard the interests of the trade in the same matter—for underselling was now unrestricted and unashamed—collapsed for lack of unanimity. It was not until the last decade of the nineteenth century that the different branches of the trade succeeded in binding themselves into permanent societies for the protection of their respective interests. The London Booksellers' Society was formed in 1890,

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

to develop a few years later into the more comprehensive body of Associated Booksellers of Great Britain and Ireland; and in 1896 the publishers followed suit by forming the existing Association to safeguard their own rights, Mr. C. J. Longman acting as its first president. The evil of underselling still continued, but the attitude of the public on the subject, and the general feeling with regard to co-operative action, had changed considerably since the middle of the nineteenth century, when trade unions were illegal. No combined attempt to cope with the problems was made, however, until the end of the century, when the Publishers' Association formally adopted the net book scheme, which came into force in January 1900. The new system had been first defined and informally inaugurated by Sir Frederick Macmillan in his now historic letter on the subject, published in the "Bookseller" in 1890. Though these proposals were not officially adopted until some ten years later they then laid the foundations of a system which has quietly revolutionised the trade both in this country and America.

The authors had formed a permanent society of their own before the present Booksellers' and Publishers' Associations came into being. Several premature attempts—very similar to the ill-starred society formed in 1736—were made earlier in the nineteenth century to protect the interests of authors. The first of these was the "Society for the Encouragement of Literature," under the patronage of the Duke of Sussex and a noble array of titled presidents; and application for a charter, it was announced, would be made to the Crown. The society was formed in 1825, mainly because "the difficulties with which authors have to contend, in bringing their works to the public, have long been the subject of complaint among literary men; and have, in many instances, repressed the early efforts of genius." Unlike the 1736 scheme, the society announced that it would not interfere with the established trade of the bookseller,



## AUTHORS AS PUBLISHERS

and that the public would be supplied with the works through the medium of the regular publishers. Unfortunately, the scheme was still-born, through the bankruptcy of the bankers in whose hands the funds had been placed. Several other attempts followed of a similar nature, the most ambitious being the "National Association for the Encouragement and Protection of Authors," proposed under equally noble patronage in 1838, but without meeting with any apparent success. Six years later a pamphlet was published by John Petheram in Chancery Lane, giving "Reasons for establishing an Authors' Publication Society; by which Literary Labour would receive a more adequate Reward, and the Price of all New Books be much Reduced"; but authors had to wait for the advent of Sir Walter Besant before anything in the shape of a permanent society was established in their interests.

A whole chapter might be written on the experiences of authors who, for various reasons, have strayed on their own account along the hazardous paths of publishing. Before the birth of the printing press they circulated their manuscripts among their friends and patrons without the aid of the professional intermediary, except to employ the scribes, when necessary, to make their copies. After Caxton's day, as we have shown in the course of our narrative, there were occasional authors whose independent spirit or love of lucre prompted them to break a lance with the natural enemy, George Wither being among the earliest stalwarts of the kind. The most conspicuous, and by far the most successful of modern ventures was Ruskin's experiment, dating from 1871, when he started his arcadian publishing business at Sunnyside, Orpington, Kent—planting it, as one of the trade journals sarcastically remarked, "in the middle of a country field." The description was literally true, but Ruskin's enthusiasm, and the whole-hearted devotion of George Allen and his family, overcame all natural obstacles. Allen had been a promising and favourite

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

pupil with Ruskin in the days when the master, together with Rossetti and Hunt, Burne-Jones and William Morris, taught drawing at the Working Men's College founded by F. D. Maurice in Great Ormond Street. Subsequently he became his assistant as drawing master there, and studied engraving under him, as well as etching under Le Keux and mezzotint under Thomas Lupton. He executed for Ruskin some of his finest steel engravings, and made geological studies with him in the Swiss mountains. The publishing venture began with the first number of "Fors Clavigera," and was remarkably successful, although unadvertised—for Ruskin had a horror of the ordinary book advertisements—and tabooed by the regular trade. The now flourishing house of Allen, begun in this unconventional fashion, was quite a family affair. Even Mrs. Allen did her share in those early days in coping with the orders which came pouring in from all parts of the kingdom, sometimes working with her husband and children until two in the morning preparing the copies for distribution. A touching tribute to her devotion was paid by Ruskin upon the death of his mother, when, removing a ring from her finger, he handed it on as a gift to Mrs. Allen.

The price charged for "Fors" was sevenpence at first, but this was afterwards raised to tenpence each number. With characteristic frankness Ruskin at once took his readers into his confidence. "It cost me," he explained, "£10 to print 1,000, and £5 more to give a picture, and a penny off my sevenpence to send you the book; a thousand sixpences are £25; when you have bought a thousand 'Fors' of me, I shall therefore have £5 for my trouble, and my single shopman, Mr. Allen, £5 for his; we won't work for less, either of us. And I mean to sell all my large books, henceforth, in the same way, well printed, well bound, and at a fixed price; and the trade may charge a proper and acknowledged profit for their trouble in retailing the book. Then the public will know what they are



SUNNYSIDE, ORPINGTON, WHERE GEORGE ALLEN FIRST  
ACTED AS RUSKIN'S PUBLISHER  
THE PUBLISHER HIMSELF STANDS IN THE FOREGROUND. RUSKIN'S BED-  
ROOM, WHEN HE SLEPT AT SUNNYSIDE, IS SEEN IMMEDIATELY OVER THE PORCH



## RUSKIN'S VENTURE

about, and so will the tradesmen. I, the first producer, answer to the best of my power for the quality of the book—paper, binding, eloquence and all; the retail dealer charges what he ought to charge openly; and if the public do not choose to give it they can't get the book. That is what I call legitimate business." Ruskin objected to the whole system of discounts and abatements, which he saw, more clearly than the trade itself, would have to be remodelled before the evils of underselling could be cured. Thus he anticipated the net system, which was not formally adopted by the trade until the end of the century. "The price of these Letters to friends of mine, as supplied by me, the original inditer, to all and sundry, through my only shopman, Mr. Allen," he writes on a later page, "is sevenpence per epistle, and not fivepence halfpenny; and the trade profit on them is intended to be, and must eventually be, as I intend, a quite honestly confessed profit, charged to the customer, not compressed out of the author; which object may be easily achieved by the retail bookseller, if he will resolutely charge the symmetrical sum of tenpence per epistle over his counter, as it is my purpose he should."

The first numbers of "Fors" were printed for Ruskin through his old publishers, Messrs. Smith and Elder, but that connexion ceased in 1873, and the little Kentish business was extended until it took over the production—though never the printing and binding—of all the founder's works. It speaks volumes for the author's popularity that in spite of the abnormally high prices which he charged for his works—13s. unbound for ordinary books and 22s. 6d. for the illustrated works—he succeeded in finding a sufficient number of buyers to run the business at a handsome profit, notwithstanding the opposition of most of the booksellers, who protested against a system which was contrary to so many of the accepted rules of the trade. On one occasion in 1879 George Allen had occasion to write to Ruskin of a book-



## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

sellers' meeting which he had attended—only to be groaned at. "It gives me much pain to think of it," wrote Ruskin in reply. "You have certainly had a great deal to put up with in fighting this battle—and I had no conception myself of the way my friends would fail me in it, nor of the general folly of the public. It is like beginning a battle with a *man*, and finding him change into a heap of mud. But we'll *wash* him away, if we can't *throttle* him!"

For they did win the battle in the end, coming to terms in 1882, when the first offers of peace came from the other side. A happy compromise was arrived at by means of terms acceptable to the regular booksellers as well as to Ruskin, and the books themselves were printed and issued at less exclusive prices. Ruskin was forced to see that his prohibitive prices prevented his works from reaching the very classes in whom he was chiefly interested, and the more reasonable sums charged for later editions increased his circulation enormously. Allen, who by this time had opened his first London office in Bell Yard, by the Law Courts, now developed his business on ordinary publishing lines, and, moving to Ruskin House in the early nineties, gradually built up a sound connexion with other authors in all branches of letters, with Ruskin's works always, of course, as the great mainstay of the firm. Ruskin's long and honourable friendship with his publisher ended only with his death. No more eloquent proof of his regard for George Allen could be given than the following letter, which he wrote from Brantwood on April 15, 1878—seven years before he paid his last visit to his Kentish publishing house :

DEAR ALLEN,—How good and kind you are, and have always been. I trust, whatever happens to me, that your position with the copyright of my books, if anybody cares for them, and with the friends gained by your honesty and industry, is secure on your little piece of Kentish home territory. I write this letter to release you from all debt to me of any kind, and to leave you, with my solemn thanks for all the energy and faith of your life,

## RUSKIN'S PROFITS

given to me so loyally, in all that I ever tried to do for good, to do now what is best for your family and yourself.

As I look back on my life in this closing time I find myself in debt, to every friend that loved me, for what a score of lives could not repay, and would fain say to them all, as to you, words of humiliation which I check only because they are so vain.

Ever (Nay—in such a time as this what “ever” is there except “to-day”—once more) your thankful and sorrowful friend—  
Master no more—

J. RUSKIN.

Surely no publisher ever received a more beautiful letter from an author! Ruskin's profits were considerably greater than many people suppose, yielding an annual income which averaged as much as £4,000 during the last fifteen years of his life. It was well for him that it was so, for having, in countless acts of unbounded generosity, given away the fortune of £200,000 which he inherited from his parents, he was entirely dependent for his income upon the profits from his books. George Allen survived Ruskin little more than six years, dying in 1907, within sight of the completion of the great Memorial Edition which he had planned as a worthy monument of the master. His publishing firm, continued under the name of George Allen and Sons, has since absorbed the publishing department of Bemrose and Sons, a house founded in 1866 and known chiefly for its topographical, antiquarian and theological works. These and other developments necessitated a move in 1909 to the new Ruskin House in Rathbone Place.

William Morris, inspired perhaps by Ruskin's example as in the Oxford days, when Ruskin's teaching pointed out, in Morris's own words, “a new road on which the world should travel,” took over in 1893 the publishing of his Kelmscott Press productions. “There is really no risk in it,” he said. “I shall get more money; and the public will have to pay less.” Hitherto Morris's ordinary publishers had been Messrs. Reeves and Turner. In the first place there had been some talk of issuing the Kelmscott Press books without a publisher at all:

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

of selling them, indeed, by auction ; but this idea was abandoned, and Morris's " Story of the Glittering Plain," the first of the series which was to do so much to revive the art of printing, appeared through Reeves and Turner in the spring of 1891. The last Kelmscott Press book to come from the same publishers was the " Utopia " in the autumn of the following year, and from that time onwards practically all the books in the series bore the imprint: " Published by William Morris at the Kelmscott Press." The only exceptions were a few productions which, for various reasons, were published elsewhere, such as Rossetti's poems, issued in two volumes by Messrs. Ellis and Elvey, and Tennyson's " Maud," by Messrs. Macmillan. The story of the Kelmscott Press belongs to the history of printing rather than that of bookselling, and will be found set forth at length in J. W. Mackail's *Life of Morris*. " The Kelmscott Press," writes Mr. Mackail, " was not carried on to make money : at first he [Morris] would have been content if it had not cost him more than he could afford to spend, and even afterwards it was worked, and the prices fixed for its products, only with the view of making its receipts meet its expenditure. No expense was spared in getting everything connected with it as near his ideal as could be produced ; yet in fact it brought in a profit which represented a fairly adequate salary for his own incessant work and oversight, and relieved him from the necessity of economising on any expense which would really add to the excellence and beauty of his printed books." Morris's inspiring example has since borne fruit in the excellent work of the Vale Press, the Essex House Press, the Doves Press, the Cardoc Press, and other recent ventures, the founders of which, however, disclaim any intention of slavishly following in Morris's footsteps. That indeed is scarcely possible, for the Kelmscott tradition was inseparably connected with Morris himself, and died with him. His wood blocks are now in the keeping of the British Museum authorities, with whom

## BUCHANAN'S BITTER PROTEST

they were deposited on the understanding that no one was to be at liberty to print from them for a hundred years.

Other authors have not been so successful as Ruskin and Morris when they have tried their hands at publishing on their own account. Mark Twain did not go so far as to start a new business, but he tried to commission publishing on arbitrary lines. "When I took up the publication of a book," he once stated, "I called in a publisher and said to him, 'I want you to publish this book along lines which I shall lay down. I am the employer, you are the *employé*. I am going to show them some new kinks in the publishing business. And I want you to draw on me for money, as you go along'—which he did. He drew on me for 56,000 dollars. Then I asked him to take the book and call it off; but he refused to do that." Robert Buchanan's experiment was more ambitious. Always a fighter, he rose in revolt against publishers in general in 1896, and brought out his books himself. But Buchanan was the last man in the world to make a fortune at publishing, and he fared no better than was to be expected. The only books of importance that he issued were his last volumes of verse—"The Outcast," "The Ballad of Mary the Mother," and "The Devil's Case." How his restless spirit raged against what he felt to be the injustice of the whole literary business may be seen in the letter which he wrote, while still his own publisher, to Sir Walter Besant—a letter printed in the "Westminster Gazette" in the week of June 1901, which, by a strange chance, witnessed the deaths of both Besant and Buchanan. "I say to you now, out of the fulness of my experience, that had I a son who thought of turning to literature as a means of livelihood and whom I could not dower with independent means of keeping Barabbas and the markets at bay, I would elect, were the choice mine, to save that son from future misery by striking him dead with my own hand! 'Whom the gods love die young,'

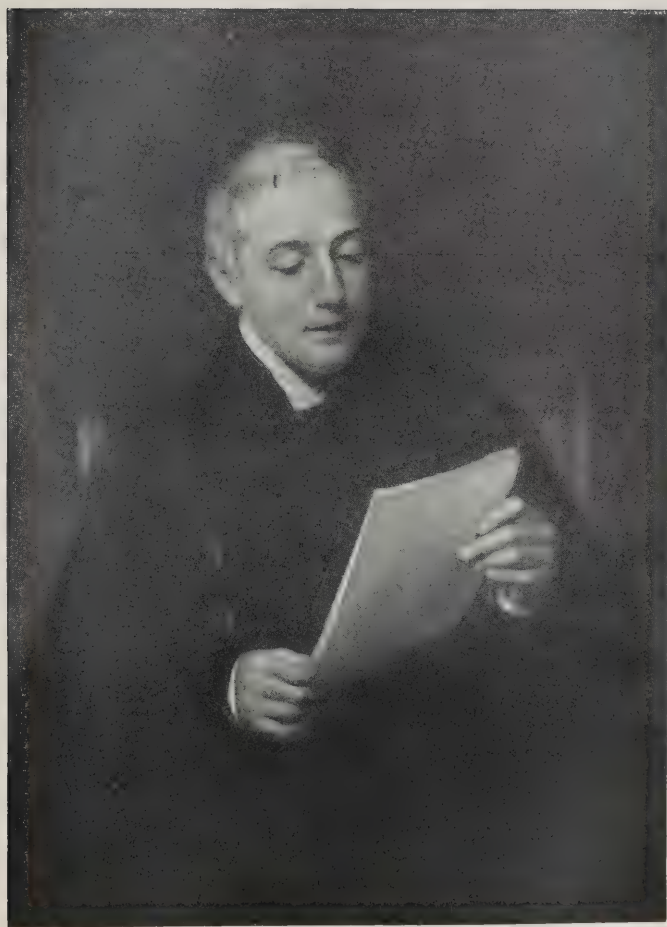
## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

I would say to myself; 'whom the gods and Barabbas preserve survive on for despondency, sadness, madness, and despair'; and my son should surely die. For what I have seen I have seen, and what I have suffered I have suffered. . . . The very stones of the street cry out and rebuke you, Sir, when you invite the young and unwary, and above all the honestly inspired, to enter the blood-stained gates of this Inferno."

Buchanan was as uncompromising in his enmity as generous in his friendship. He probably meant all he said in these wild anathemas, but they tend rather to show how the iron had sunk into his soul in the last disappointing years of his career than how hopeless was the literary life, and how cruel were the ways of "Barabbas." "Barabbas," it is scarcely necessary to explain, is in repetition of the legend, "Now Barabbas was a publisher," for many years attributed to Byron, though John Murray IV. has long since proved that Byron, who of all men had no reason to complain of his publisher in such terms, never said or wrote anything of the sort.

Generally speaking, the chief source of trouble with authors is that they are naturally careless over business matters. They know little of the legal rights of their literary property and less of the technicalities of the trade. A certain tendency to exaggerate the filthiness of lucre has also done something in the past to encourage the less scrupulous publisher in regarding the author almost as legitimate prey. "No man but a blockhead," says Johnson, "ever wrote except for money," and though this has been cried out against as a wilful paradox we have Professor Walter Raleigh confirming it as the true creed of the professional author in all countries and at all times. "Young poets," he writes in his introduction to "Johnson on Shakespeare," "may be satisfied with fame, rich amateurs with elegance, missionaries and reformers with influence. But the publisher who should depend for his livelihood on the labours of these three classes would be in a poor way, and indeed, if publishers





JOHN MURRAY THE SECOND [1778-1843]  
*From a picture by H. W. Pickersgill, R.A., in the  
possession of Mr. John Murray*



## THE SOCIETY OF AUTHORS

would communicate to the world an account of their intimate transactions, they could tell how the author who is content with reputation for his first book talks of nothing but money when he comes to proffer his second."

We are bound to say that we do not hear so much of the filthiness of lucre since Sir Walter Besant placed the profession of letters on a more businesslike footing with the Society of Authors, founded in 1883, and incorporated in the following year under the Presidency of Lord Tennyson. Besant himself, being one of the proverbial exceptions, was well able to look after his own interests, but, knowing how different it was in many other cases, he created the society which, in spite of misunderstandings and much misrepresentation, has grown in strength until it is now widely recognised as a most potent influence for good. Its aims have always been approved by the majority of the publishers, who very naturally are as jealous as anybody of the best traditions of the trade.

Sir Walter Besant gathered his inside knowledge of publishing by issuing "Ready Money Mortiboy"—the novel with which he began his literary alliance with James Rice—on commission. The authors in this case were more wary, and more successful than was Mark Twain in the similar circumstances already alluded to. Sir Walter, in "My First Book," tells the story of this venture as follows:

When the time came for publishing it, we were faced with the fact that a new and anonymous novel is naturally regarded with doubt by publishers. Nothing seems more risky than such a venture. On the other hand, we were perfectly satisfied that there was no risk in our novel at all. This, of course, we had found out, not only from the assurance of Vanity, but also from the reception the work had met with during its progress through the magazine. Therefore we had it printed and bound at our own expense, and we placed the book, ready for publication, in the hands of Mr. William Tinsley. We so arranged the business that the printer's bill was not due till the first returns came from the publisher. By this artful plan we avoided paying anything

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

at all. We had only printed a modest edition of 600, and these all went off, leaving, of course, a very encouraging margin. The cheap edition was sold to Henry S. King and Co. for a period of five years. Then the novel was purchased outright by Chatto and Windus, who still continue to publish it—and, I believe, to sell it.

“Ready Money Mortiboy,” indeed, has always been one of the most popular novels of the Rice and Besant series. It is curious to learn to what extent Sir Walter, in his capacity of authors’ guardian, persistently broke his own rules. He was always warning writers against signing agreements which ignored any possible source of future profit, yet, with one exception, he invariably sold his books outright to his own publishers, Messrs. Chatto and Windus—sometimes, however, reserving the dramatic rights. The exception was his “Eulogy of Richard Jefferies,” two-thirds of the profits of which he arranged, with the ready generosity which was characteristic of the man, to be paid to Jefferies’ relatives. The “Eulogy” was beneficial in more ways than one, for it gave an immediate impetus to the sale of Jefferies’ neglected works. Sir Walter’s zeal on behalf of his brother authors was unbounded, but it was sometimes carried to excess. “No worker in the world,” he wrote in 1892, “not even the needlewoman, is more helpless, more ignorant, more cruelly sweated than the author.” After that it is surprising to learn from Chatto and Windus that Sir Walter’s relations with his own publishers were always of an exceptionally cordial nature—as a bundle of letters from the novelist abundantly testifies.

The literary agent, like the Authors’ Society, is another important factor in the modern publishing world; and it is hardly surprising if the publishers regard his coming scarcely as an unmixed blessing. The literary agent is rather like the little boy who, when he is good, is very, very good, but when he is naughty—— At his best he saves the author the bother of bargaining with the publisher, and probably squeezes more out of that dread pay-

## THE "TIMES" BOOK CLUB

master than most authors could succeed in doing for themselves: he must squeeze more, indeed, to allow for his own commission. But he has made authorship more of a trade than ever, and destroyed much of the old intimate relationship which existed between publishers and men of letters in the palmy days of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

It is hardly necessary to add that the bookshops also have changed. Booksellers now have the net system to protect them, it is true, but the long fight drove many of the best men out of the business. Latterly there has been competition of another kind. The "Times" started its great library in Oxford Street and prices came tumbling down all round; but we have no intention of reopening old wounds by entering into the rights and wrongs of that exciting struggle. The "Times" Book Club has gained in strength by compromising matters, and now boasts that it is "the largest bookshop in the world." Boot's Library, with its popular service all over the kingdom, is another organisation which, excellent enough from its own and the general reader's point of view, has not improved matters from the standpoint of the retail bookseller. It was Felix Dahn, the German poet, publicist and historian, who said: "To write a book is a task needing only pen, ink and paper; to print a book is rather more difficult, because genius often expresses itself illegibly; to read a book is more difficult still, for one has to struggle with sleep. But to sell a book is the most difficult task of all."

Some bookshops are left that we still love to haunt; and the larger firms that remain—the survival of the fittest—are, many of them, as pleasant to visit as in the more leisurely days of the past; but the ordinary bookseller has no time now to talk over his favourite authors, or the latest books on the market. How could he while ten thousand odd books are coming out every year? And is there not some excuse for the young assistant who, struggling to master the interminable lists of new



## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

publications, looked up blankly at the lady who asked, "Have you Praed?" and answered, "Yes, Madam, I've prayed, but that doesn't help me much!"

Our history has at length reached the point at which it is possible to link it up with the separate records of twelve of our great houses of to-day, which may be left to complete the story of modern publishing. Centenaries are plentiful among these and other venerable firms still existing—for our list might well have been extended. There are the great religious institutions for instance—the S.P.C.K., the R.T.S., and the British and Foreign Bible Society; the theological house established in 1810 by James Nisbet, who, like William Hone, came under the influence of Edward Irving, and not only sat under him—as may be gathered from the "Lessons from the Life of James Nisbet the Publisher," but contributed £21,000 to the Regent's Square Church; and the firm of Seeley and Co., which, though more general in its interests to-day, has been largely identified with religious works since it was founded in London by Leonard Benton Seeley in 1784. Eyre and Spottiswoode, publishers as well as printers, are also among the centenarians, together with Dulau and Co., the foreign booksellers and publishers of Soho Square; Deighton Bell and Co., of Cambridge; and doubtless other firms in various parts of England. To the same category belong such old-established Scottish houses as T. Nelson and Sons,\* W. and R. Chambers, Oliphant, Anderson and Ferrier, and Oliver and Boyd—centenarians all—who with printers like T. and A. Constable, R. and R. Clark, and Messrs. Morrison, have helped to make Edinburgh, in proportion to its size, the busiest printing centre in the kingdom. "It is very fitting that all this should be," as Mr. James Milne has remarked in his "Book Monthly," "because if Edinburgh

\* Nelson's have made so great a name with their children's books, as well as their sevenpenny and other reprints, and two-shilling novels, that the story is told of a boy who, when asked who Nelson was, replied, "The publisher of cheap books."

## SOME PRESENT-DAY PUBLISHERS

is not the literary centre it once was, it still has a literary aroma, expressed certainly in a constant smell of printers' ink. In nearly every corner of the town you will find some printing-house rolling out its sheets of black on white, in greater number even than when Sir Walter Scott was writing his novels at 39 Castle Street."

It has been impossible to mention all the more modern houses in the course of our crowded narrative, but we hope to atone for any neglect of the kind in some future edition. When the complete history of the book trade during the last quarter of a century comes to be written much of its most interesting material will be found in the records of such publishers as Methuen and Co., the venture of a schoolmaster, which, scoring its first popular success with Kipling's "Barrack Room Ballads," has grown into one of the best-organised publishing houses in the Kingdom, with Mr. G. E. Webster and Mr. E. V. Lucas now associated with the founder on the board of directors; Mr. Edward Arnold, established in 1890 by a grandson of Dr. Arnold of Rugby; Mr. John Lane, who has revived a good old custom with his sign of the Bodley Head in Vigo Street, Bodley being chosen as the patron saint because he was not only "the most pious of founders," but also, as the publisher has explained in his reprint of "The Life of Sir Thomas Bodley," "one of the most notable worthies of Devon, my native county"; Mr. Fisher Unwin, who has "discovered" as many new authors since he started for himself in 1882 as any other publisher in London; T. C. and E. C. Jack of Edinburgh and London, who have come decidedly to the front in recent years; J. W. Arrowsmith of Bristol, who published Hugh Conway's "Called Back" as the first volume of his Bristol Library in 1884—selling 350,000 copies of it within the next five years—and whose later successes have included Jerome K. Jerome's "Three Men in a Boat" and Anthony Hope's "Prisoner of Zenda"; J. M. Dent, who, more than any other publisher, has made books pretty as well as cheap, with the result that his

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

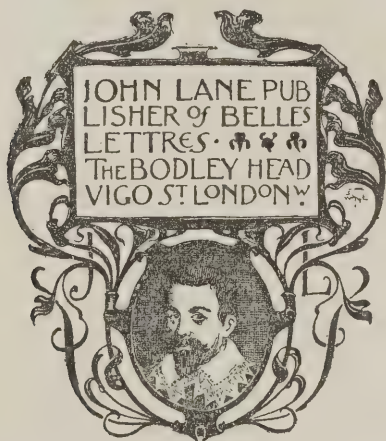
Temple Classics, "Everyman's Library," and other series of the kind, sell literally by the million copies every year; Duckworth and Co., founded in 1898 by Gerald Duckworth, and closely connected with Sir Leslie Stephen, whose publishers they became; Williams and Norgate, similarly associated with Herbert Spencer and his works; \* Sir Isaac Pitman and Sons, who branched out in general publishing when they took over the business of Isbister and Co.; Bertram Dobell, author as well as bookseller and publisher, and friend of James Thomson the "Poet of Despair," to whom also we owe Traherne and Strode, and forgotten works of other writers; Eveleigh Nash, one of the most enterprising of the younger houses; and the great firms of Hodder and Stoughton, Hutchinson and Co., and Alfred Nutt—whose tragic death in France while endeavouring to save his son from drowning, robbed the book world of a scholar who had distinguished himself both as author and publisher. Meantime the new material for those and other matters which pressure of space has excluded from our book will be found, if anywhere, in the admirable bibliography by Mr. W. H. Peet among our appendices.

Of the future of bookselling it is only safe to say that it lies entirely on the lap of the gods. No one can tell whither the present tendencies are leading us, especially in the world of fiction. With so many conflicting interests, it is not easy to see how bookselling can ever settle down to a placid existence. If our narrative shows anything it is that there has been little internal peace in the English trade in the whole course of its existence. Things might have been better under such a system as that by which the German book is governed—admittedly the best organisation of the kind in the world; or

\* Spencer's "Principles of Psychology" and a volume of "Essays" were first published by Longmans, but he left them for a publisher named Manwaring, whose subsequent failure involved Spencer in considerable loss. After that he began the connexion with Williams and Norgate, which he continued to his death.

## A MODERN SHOP SIGN

possibly under a rejuvenated Stationers' Company, with a more benevolent autocracy than marked its earlier rule, and power to unite all the scattered forces with the real *esprit de corps* which is the secret of success in any combination of the kind. But it is not for an outsider to preach the way to salvation.



MR. JOHN LANE'S SIGN  
IN VIGO STREET

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN : PUBLISHERS OF TO-DAY

### THE OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

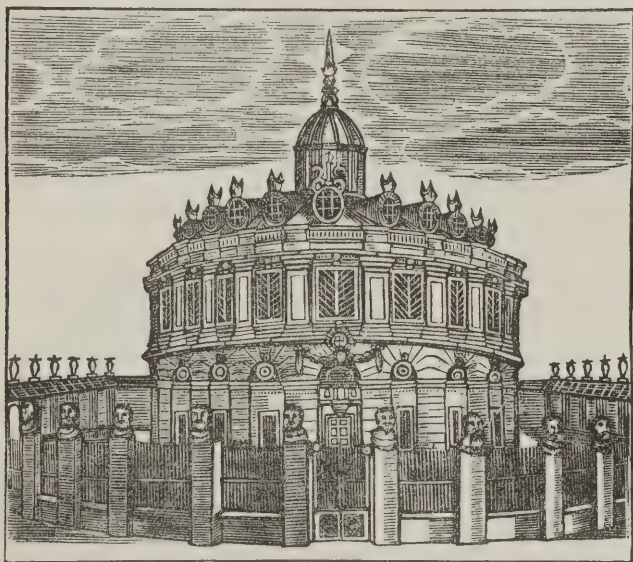
**O**XFORD produced books more than forty years before John Siberch set up the first press in Cambridge, but printing was not permanently established at either university until towards the end of Elizabeth's reign. To Oxford, however, belongs the unique distinction of being able to produce a list of practically all its publications for over 320 years. With a press from Cologne, Oxford was Caxton's first typographical rival in England, and, indeed, produced a book bearing a date, which, on the face of it, was printed nine years before Caxton's "Dictes of the Philosophers." The battle which has been waged about the date of the "1468" volume (the treatise of Tyrannius Rufinus on the Apostles' Creed, here ascribed to St. Jerome) is an oft-told tale, and has led to almost as many arguments as have been put forward in the older controversy as to whether printing was "invented" in Holland or Germany. The opinion of most authorities, including Bradshaw and Blades, is that 1468 is an error for 1478 (an X having dropped out of "MCCCCCLXXVIII."). Caxton's Oxford rival did not trouble him long, for the Press in the University town suddenly ceased operations in 1486, about the time that the printing by the mysterious schoolmaster at St. Albans also came to an end.

Twenty-one years ensued and then, for a period of about fourteen months, printers from abroad were again at work at Oxford, though the fact is virtually ignored by the registers of the University. The suppression of the Oxford Press by Wolsey led to another long interval of inactivity; it was not until 1585 that the Press was permanently established. "Late in the reign of Elizabeth," writes Ingram in his "Memorials of Oxford,"



## EARLY WORK OF THE OXFORD PRESS

“the Earl of Leicester, being then Chancellor of the University, had the good sense and spirit to revive and reorganise its typography. Its sole expense, a new press, was erected; a fit person was specially appointed printer to the University; and in 1585 came forth in Latin the first fruits of the establishment, ‘Moral Questions



THE SHELDONIAN THEATRE, OXFORD

IN WHICH THE OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS WAS  
INSTALLED IN 1669.

*(From an old wood-block.)*

about Aristotle's *Ethics*,’ by John Case, Fellow of St. John’s; dedicated, with great propriety, to the Chancellor.” From that date the Press was kept in constant work, and before the close of the sixteenth century Joseph Barnes, the “fit person” referred to, had published between seventy and eighty books, “many of them of high character and most of them respectable in their style of execution.” The charter of privileges in 1632 gave the University direct control of the printing, but as yet there are few signs of actual academical interest

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

or interference, and the various printers were still left to exercise their trade in hired buildings. The great patron of the Press at this period was Archbishop Laud, who was virtually the first to encourage the University to raise the establishment into a great national institution. With the downfall of Laud came the Rebellion, with its numbing influence upon learning; and the Oxford Press, whose printers—with Oxford itself as the headquarters of the king—were deeply implicated on the royal side, had some difficulty in holding its ground. That it was not completely crushed was mainly due to Bishop Fell, the hero of the familiar verse adapted from Martial's epigram:

I do not love thee, Dr. Fell;  
The reason why I cannot tell;  
But this I know, and know full well,  
I do not love thee, Dr. Fell.

Dr. Fell, taking up the work begun by Laud, checked every attempt that was made by its rivals to reduce its importance. In the Civil Wars he bore arms for the King in the garrison of Oxford, and, receiving ecclesiastical promotion after the Restoration, became Vice-Chancellor of the University in 1666. It was in 1666 that he presented some of the sets of types which, with the generous gifts of Junius, laid the foundation of the Oxford University Foundry as it exists to-day. Fell worked hard and gave large sums of money for the development of the Press, both in improving its mechanical resources and providing it with scholarly editions of classical and other works. Thomas Guy's relations with Oxford, and the troubles with the London Stationers' Company at this period, have been dealt with in our general survey of publishing. In spite of these troubles the Oxford Press prospered, and after being carried on for some years in the old House of Congregation in St. Mary's Church, was removed to the floor of the Sheldonian, where it had its home until 1713.

It is well known that the earliest Oxford printing was

## CLARENDON'S GIFT

executed from characters brought from Cologne, and, when Fell and Francis Junius were seeking types in the seventeenth century, they sent, according to Fell's own statement, to Germany, France, and Holland for them. The old punches and matrices remaining in the Oxford Type Foundry are for the most part kept in the original oak boxes, forty-six of which were "discreetly" repaired in 1891. Mr. Horace Hart, the Controller of the Press, undertook a formidable task when he decided to put the whole collection of the foundry in order. He tells us \* that in addition to tracing, classifying, and arranging alphabetically (so far as was practicable) more than 7,000 matrices, all the corresponding punches still in existence have been identified by fitting them into the matrices. There are 7,632 matrices and 2,906 punches altogether. What their original cost was is not known with certainty, but Dr. Fell gives some idea of the amount when he says that between 1672 and 1679 the "imprimery" had been "furnisht at the expence of above four thousand pound." Much of the type is still in use. It was used entirely for the Coronation Prayer Book, issued for King Edward's coronation in 1902.

The next important chapter in the story of the Oxford Press begins with Clarendon's gift of the copyright of his "History of the Rebellion." It was mainly with the profits accruing from the sale of this classic that the University was provided with the first building erected for the specific purpose of carrying on its printing business—hence the name of the Clarendon Press. The removal from the Sheldonian took place in 1713, and the new printing house began its operations in October of that year. The first Clarendon Building, in Broad Street, was designed by Vanbrugh; everybody familiar with Oxford knows it by sight. Another period of slackness settled upon the institution in the eighteenth century, and it was left to the administrative zeal and

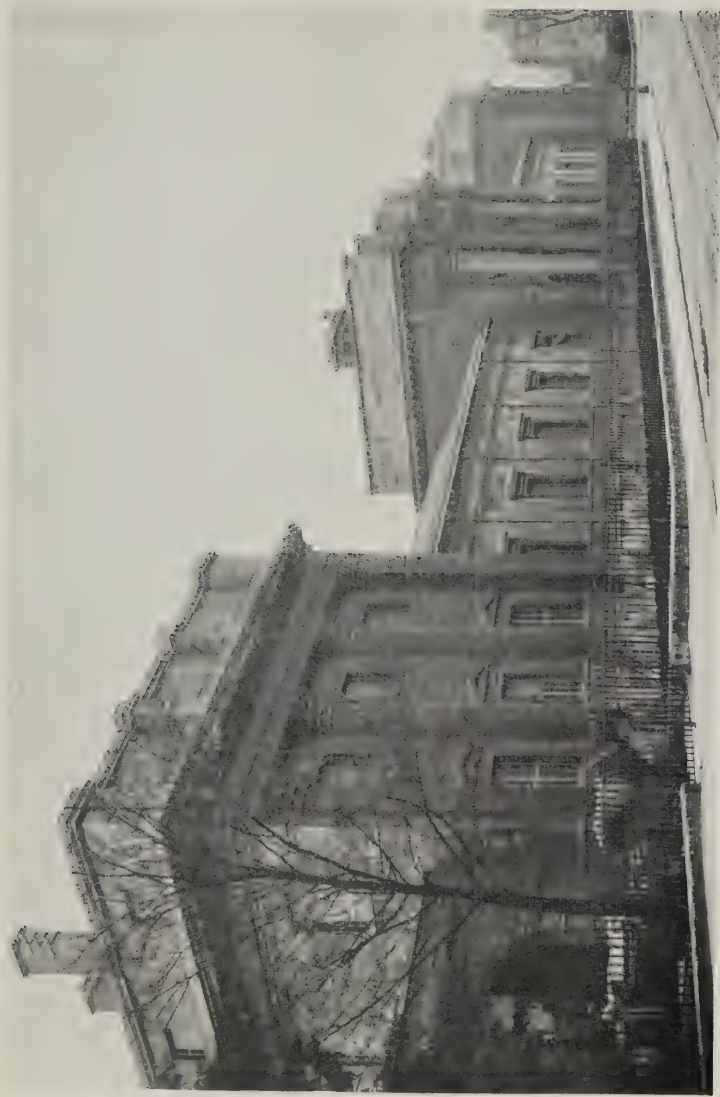
\* "Notes on a Century of Typography at Oxford at the University Press, 1693-1794," Oxford, 1900.

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

judgment of Sir William Blackstone to put fresh life into the work. Thenceforward there is little but progress and prosperity to record. In 1830, the business increasing beyond the capacities of the Broad Street house, a move was made to the present fine building in Walton Street.

The name of the Oxford Press has been associated with the trade in Bibles for nearly three centuries. It is claimed that the sales of Oxford Bibles—thanks in large measure to the introduction of the Oxford India paper—are the largest in the world, averaging upwards of a million copies every year. As most people are aware, the Revised Version is the joint property of the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, which voted £20,000 to the expenses of publication, but the copyrights of the Authorised Version and of the Book of Common Prayer are vested in the Crown, authority to print them in England being granted by charter to Oxford and Cambridge Universities and by license to the Queen's printer. There was an unprecedented run on the Oxford University Press Warehouse on May 17, 1881, when the Revised New Testament was published. Over a million copies were sold within the first twenty-four hours. Bribery and corruption were tried in vain by several of the more unscrupulous American firms to secure advance sheets. So keen was the interest that the "Times" of Chicago printed the complete New Testament as a supplement, having had the whole of it telegraphed for the purpose from New York immediately the copies were landed from England. The Oxford authorities are so proud of the accuracy of their printing that they give a guinea to the first person who points out a printer's error in any edition of the authorised version of the Oxford Bible. This payment has not averaged even a single guinea for several years, though there are about one hundred editions of the Oxford Bible altogether, and the mistakes are rarely more serious than a dropped letter. The archaisms "bewray" and "astonied" have involved world-wide correspondence with applicants who seek in vain for the guinea reward.





THE CLARENDON PRESS, WALTON STREET, OXFORD  
THE BIBLE PRESS IS NEAREST TO THE SPECTATOR ; THE LEARNED PRESS AT THE FAR END





## OXFORD INDIA PAPER

The Oxford India paper has revolutionised both the Bible and Prayer-book trade, and is the special pride of the Clarendon Press. The story of its discovery has been told before, but will bear re-telling. Some seventy years ago an Oxford graduate returned from India with a small fold of paper remarkably thin, but at the same time opaque and tough. He presented the paper to the University Press, and a few Bibles, half the usual thickness, were printed from it. As much as £20 each was offered for them, but no copies were sold. One was presented to Queen Victoria. Futile efforts were made to trace the paper to its source. Even Mr. Gladstone was asked if he could throw any light on the matter, and he suggested a search in Japan, but though a paper thin and tough enough was found there, it was too transparent to permit of printing on both sides. The search was gradually abandoned and the paper lost sight of until a copy of the book reached the hands of Mr. Frowde. This was in 1874; Mr. Frowde had only taken over the management of the London business of the Clarendon Press at the close of the preceding year; and experiments were at once started at the Wolvercote Mills, two miles away on the river from Oxford, with the object of manufacturing a similar paper. After several failures came success, and on August 25, 1875, an edition of the Bible was published similar in every respect to the two dozen copies printed in 1842. A quarter of a million copies were sold within a few weeks. No workman at the Wolvercote Mills is allowed to understand more than one stage of the process of manufacture. The paper remains a mechanical mystery. The mills themselves, it should be added, have a history. They date back to the period of Dr. Fell, who encouraged the fitting up of the place by Mr. George Edwards, a "cutter in wood of the great letters, who engraved many other things made use of in the printing of books, and had a talent in maps, although done with his left hand." "Some of the best paper made in England is made at Wolvercote Mill," wrote Hearne, as far back

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

### THE CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Before the age of William Pitt, its eponymous hero, the Cambridge University Press, like that of its sister University, suffered many vicissitudes. The facts connected with its earlier history—the work of John Siberch, who set up the first press in Cambridge in 1521, the struggle against ecclesiastical prejudice and commercial jealousy which succeeded the appointment of Thomas Thomas as University printer some sixty years later, and the ups and downs of the Press during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries—are widely scattered, but, collected and strung together consecutively, they form one of the most striking chapters in the history of the book trade. We have already dealt with the part played by the Universities in the organisation and development of bookselling in the days before the introduction of printing. Oxford, as stated on p. 344, had produced printed books more than forty years before Siberch came to Cambridge. Siberch has usually been identified with Siber or Sibert, who printed at Lyons between 1482 and 1498, but Mr. Graves, in the “Dictionary of National Biography,” considers it more probable that he came to England from Cologne. There is no doubt, however, that he was a friend of Erasmus, staying in his house when lecturing at Cambridge on St. Jerome. Erasmus greets him in a letter, written from Basle on Christmas Day, 1525, to Dr. Robert Aldrich, of King’s College, afterwards Bishop of Carlisle. The printer had apparently ceased operations at Cambridge when the great scholar’s letter was written; at all events we lose sight of him after 1522, and the nine or ten books recorded under his name are the only fruits we have of the two years’ work of his press. Erasmus’ “*De Conscribendis Epistolis*” had been printed by him at Cambridge in 1521. Siberch styled himself the first Greek printer in England, and one of his earliest productions, Linacre’s Latin translation of

## EARLY PRINTING AT CAMBRIDGE

"Galen de Temperamentis"—the prescribed text-book in the medical course of study—contains a little Greek matter which is believed to represent the earliest appearance of Greek metal types in England. But he left no book entirely printed in that character. Two years previously Caxton's pupil and successor at Westminster, Wynkyn de Worde, had introduced a few Greek words, cut in wood, in his edition of Whitenton's "*Grammatica*." Siberch worked his press at the sign of the Arma Regia (a fact which explains how he stamped the Royal Arms of England and France on the sides of some of his books), facing St. Michael's Church, now part of Gonville and Caius College. The Bodleian contains a splendid example of the Linacre volume, printed on vellum in the original binding, and bearing the Royal Arms, the identical copy presented by Linacre to Henry VIII. That monarch in 1534 granted to the University a special license to appoint from time to time three stationers who were empowered to print all manner of books approved of by the Chancellor and his viceregent, or three doctors, and to sell these and any other works passed by the same censors. By means of this censorship the opponents of the Reformation hoped to suppress heretical literature in the University, but it is curious that one of the stationers appointed in pursuance of the Royal decree was Sygar Nicholson, of Gonville Hall, who had been charged in 1529 with holding Lutheran opinions and harbouring Lutheran works. The proctors' accounts mention that fagots for burning Nicholson's books on that occasion cost the University a groat.

The licensed press was strangely unproductive. After Siberch's last volume in 1522, there is no record of another book from a Cambridge press for sixty-two years. The Oxford press was barren for a very similar period. The intolerant Church, which, as we have explained in an earlier chapter, began by countenancing the art, grew fearful of its possibilities, and established a censorship which led to serious deterioration both in the quantity

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

and quality of the books published. Printing, during Mary's reign, was confined as far as possible to members of the London Stationers' Company, and trade jealousy on the Company's part seems to have had something to do with the delay in re-establishing the press at Cambridge. When Elizabeth had reigned some eighteen or nineteen years, however, the Vice-Chancellor and Heads of the University determined to assert their independence in the matter. In 1577, Lord Burghley, objecting "to prejudice the Queen's Grants," discouraged their proposal to restore the art of printing in the University, but they settled the question in 1582 by appointing Thomas Thomas, a Fellow of King's College, as University printer, the first of a long and honourable line which has remained unbroken to the present day. "The circumstances that attended Thomas's first year of office," writes Mr. Mullinger, in his history of the University to the accession of Charles I., to which we are indebted for much of our information, "were by no means of favourable augury. Among the most rising scholars at Cambridge at this time was the eminent William Whitaker, Fellow of Trinity College, who had succeeded in 1580 to the Regius Professorship of Divinity. In 1583, Thomas was entrusted with a work by Whitaker for publication, and the reputation already acquired by the author caused its appearance to be awaited with some interest. Other books were also in preparation, when suddenly the agents of the Stationers' Company appeared upon the scene and seized the press, the whole plant, and all the printed sheets on which they could lay hands. The humiliation and pecuniary loss inflicted by this summary proceeding roused the spirit of the University, and a formal demand was despatched by the Vice-Chancellor and Heads to the Bishop of London (by whose authority the seizure had been sanctioned) for the restitution of the property, and at the same time an urgent appeal was addressed to Burghley, imploring his good offices for the protection of the University in the exercise of its ancient privileges."



## STATIONERS' COMPANY *v.* UNIVERSITIES

The Bishop was John Aylmer, hardened since the time when he watched over the education of Lady Jane Grey, and now distinguished by his zeal against the Puritans. The correspondence which followed upon the Cambridge raid reads rather curiously in days when the liberty of the press is merely a matter of historic interest.

In their report to Burghley, the Bishop and the wardens of the Stationers' Company added insult to injury by describing Thomas Thomas as "a man utterlie ignorant in printing and pretending to be the printer to the Universitie of Cambridge," and also pointed out the danger to the commonwealth involved by the activity of a press "farre from ordinarie research." There were already fifty-three printers in London, urged the wardens, and on that account alone a press at Cambridge was less necessary than it had ever been. Then follows a delightfully naïve proposal to the Bishop on the part of the wardens:

And we will recompense the said schollar for all his charge that he hath been in the suite aforesaide, and also paie him to the full for all such instrumentes as he hathe already provided, and withal be most ready to doe to the saide Universitie or arrange there such acceptable service in printinge as anye waie he is or mighte be able. And herein we proteste and think in our conscience we doe the said schollar a greate good turne and are a meane that he doe not undoe himself.

The University authorities, on their part, stoutly defended their printer, "whom we know to be a very godly and honest man," but it was not until the following March that Burghley, having been assured as to the validity of the charter of Henry VIII. by the Master of the Rolls, Sir Gilbert Gerrard (himself a Cambridge M.A.), wrote authorising the reinstatement of Thomas. Thomas, besides being "a very godly and honest man," and printer to the University, was an accomplished scholar, like many other early printers. He compiled a Latin dictionary so assiduously that his health broke down, and he died shortly after its completion—not,

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

however, before the Stationers' Company had pirated the work, together with other books printed by him, whereby, to quote the letter which the Vice-Chancellor and Heads wrote to Lord Burghley on the subject, he was "almost utterly disabled." Thomas, by the way, dedicated his dictionary to Lord Burghley. It went through five impressions in eight years, and by 1644 had reached its fourteenth edition. In the dedication to Lord Chancellor Bacon of the eleventh edition of the dictionary, published in 1619, the following tribute was paid to Thomas's memory by John Legate, his successor :

He was about thirty years ago a famous printer among your Cantabrigians ; yes, something more than a Printer such as we now are, who understand the Latin that we print no more than Bellerophon the letters he carried, and who sell in our shops nothing of our own except the paper black with the press's sweat. But he, a companion of the Stephenses and of the other, very few, printers of the true kind and best omen, was of opinion that it was men of learning, thoroughly imbued with academic studies, who should give themselves to cultivating and rightly applying that illustrious benefit sent down from heaven and given to aid mankind and perpetuate the arts. Accordingly what more fit than that when he had wrought what was worthy of type, he should himself, needing aid of none, act as midwife to his own progeny ?

Meantime the University had increased the suspicion and mistrust with which both Aylmer and Whitgift regarded its printing operations by producing a new translation in English of Travers' heretical "Disciplina." "Ever sens I hard," wrote the indignant Archbishop, "that they had a printer at Cambridge I did greatlie fear this and such like inconveniences wold followe," and at his urgent request every impression of the work that could be traced was burned. If Whitgift could have had his way he would probably have put an end to the Press as well ; he did suggest that it should be subjected to the same strict rules under which her Majesty's printers worked ; but nothing came of it.

## “ THAT PURITAN CAMBRIDGE PRINTER ”

In 1586, two years later, Thomas Thomas, whom “ Martin Mar-prelate ” called “ that Puritan Cambridge printer,” made matters worse by undertaking to publish “ The Harmony of the Confessions of Faith of Christian and Reformed Churches,” which Aylmer had previously condemned in London. “ The Harmony,” being subsequently pronounced an innocuous publication, was in due course printed ; but the incident did not improve the relationship existing between the Press and the ecclesiastical powers. University publishing, indeed, was never more grievously handicapped than in those days. Besides being opposed by the Church, the sister presses of Oxford and Cambridge were systematically victimised by the unscrupulous publishers of London, who pirated the University volumes (there was no copyright law to prevent them), and undersold the legitimate publishers. The Universities retaliated by forbidding the local booksellers to buy or sell any books printed in London or elsewhere in England when an edition had already been produced or was in contemplation at either Oxford or Cambridge, “ under pain of perpetual banishment and confiscation of such books,” the students being also prohibited the purchase of these editions. That was in 1585-86, and the Star Chamber added to the hardships by restricting the number of presses and apprentices at each University to “ one at one tyme at the most.”

Thomas's successor at Cambridge was John Legatt or Legate, a London stationer, who was the first to use the device of the “ Alma Mater Cantabrigia ” and “ Hinc lucem et pocula sacra ” round it. He remained at the head of the Press until the seventeenth century was seven or eight years old—harassed by the jealousy of the Stationers' Company and worried repeatedly by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. His immediate successors for many years fared no better, and the Great Rebellion brought other excitements to distract their attention. When Cromwell seized Cambridge in 1643, Thomas

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

Buck and Roger Daniel were partners as University printers, and only a year previously had issued their fine edition of Beza's Greek and Latin Testament. In 1628-29 Buck and his partner were accused by the Stationers of having broken a decree of the Star Chamber, but the Lord Chief Justice, after consulting with six other Judges, advised the Privy Council that no patent for sole printing restrained the privilege of the University Press under the license of the Chancellor, or the Vice-Chancellor and doctors. Two years later, however, the Privy Council limited the privilege of the University to a yearly impression of 3,000 "Lilly's Grammars" and "Common Prayers with Singing Psalms," without restraint of number, the only condition being that the Bible was to be bound with them. The Long Parliament abolished the Star Chamber, but fresh restrictions continued to trammel the printing press throughout the country.

In its earliest days the Cambridge Press had no home of its own ; its work was done at the houses of the University printers. The first attempt to remedy this was made through John Field, who succeeded Buck—then sole printer—in 1650. Field, on behalf of the University, took a lease of the ground near Queens' College, and built the printing house which was in use until the nineteenth century. Another building was added to the north of this in 1696, when, thanks to the energy of Richard Bentley, scholar and critic, and the patronage of the Duke of Somerset, new life was instilled into the Press. The Duke had been elected Chancellor in 1689, and he came to the assistance of the Press of his University in much the way that Bishop Fell went to the rescue of the Clarendon Press some thirty years before. Contributing considerable sums of money himself and obtaining benefactions from others, he helped largely to improve and renovate the business. The two buildings were used until 1716, when the more modern house was made over to the Professors of Anatomy and Chemistry, a Grace of





THE PITT BUILDING, CAMBRIDGE  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

VIEW FACING TRUMPINGTON STREET, CAMBRIDGE,  
THE HIGH STREET OF JOHN SIBERCH'S DAY





## PITT AND THE CAMBRIDGE PRESS

the Senate stating that it was of no other use to the University. The Press then confined its operations to the older building, which stood at the corner of Silver Street and Queens' Lane, with a range of warehouses extending eastward from it.

The circumstances which led to the adoption of the name "Pitt Press" are set forth in Clark and Willis's "Architectural History of the University." Strictly speaking, the name "Pitt Press" only applies to part of the existing buildings, which were erected in 1831, with the balance of the money subscribed for the Pitt Statue in Hanover Square. The University had already shown a disposition to honour the memory of her distinguished son, first by allowing a statue to be placed in the Senate House, and afterwards by accepting £1,000 offered by the Statue Committee to found a Pitt Scholarship. It is suggested in the "Architectural History" that circumstances may have induced the London Pitt Club to turn its attention to Cambridge when considering the purposes to which the surplus fund at its disposal might best be devoted. Dr. Monk, Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol, who had been Professor of Greek at Cambridge from 1808 to 1822, is believed to have originated the idea, but the first definite proposal came in a letter to Vice-Chancellor Lamb from Lord Camden, chairman of the Committee and Chancellor of the University. The Committee, he said in a subsequent letter, "feel that it will be a most flattering addition to the character and reputation of Mr. Pitt that his name should be connected with that press from which emanate works of enlightened literature and profound learning, and they trust they will be able to add to the magnificent improvements now proceeding at Cambridge by the erection of a building which will adorn and decorate the University." That was in June 1824, but four years elapsed before the committee began seriously to consider the nature of the proposed building. The design submitted by the architect, E. Blore, was accepted towards the end of 1829, and the first stone laid

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

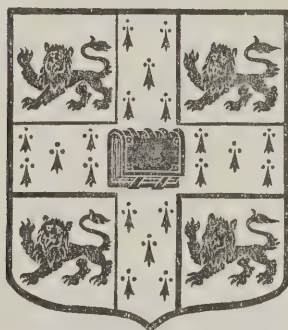
by Lord Camden in October 1831. The committee, meanwhile, had discovered that the Hanover Square statue would cost more than the members anticipated (Chantry received £7,000 for it), and they were unable to carry out their original plan of paying for all the additions required for the completion of the Press. The cost of the buildings which could not be included in the range next Trumpington Street was accordingly defrayed by the University. The new home took about eighteen months to build, and cost exactly £10,711 8s. 9d. On April 28, 1833, in the presence of the undergraduates and the dignitaries of the University, Lord Camden handed the key to Dr. Webb, the Vice-Chancellor. "Like the building in our sister University," said the Vice-Chancellor in reply to Lord Camden's speech, "which bears the name of Lord Clarendon, this is dedicated to the memory of him whose counsels upheld and whose guidance preserved this country amid the torrent of anarchy and infidelity which overwhelmed the neighbouring nations, raising it to a dignity and eminence which rendered it the refuge and sanctuary of religion and virtue." Undergraduates have since dubbed the impressive-looking building in Trumpington Street the "Freshman's Church," and the gateway tower at a first glance certainly gives one the impression that it is an ecclesiastical structure of some sort. It used to be a favourite hoax with Cambridge students to send the uninitiated new-comer to church there, but the joke is too well known to make the trick worth playing nowadays.

Cambridge University, until 1873, had its publishing done through the agency of various London firms, but in that year the Press established its own publishing warehouse in Paternoster Row, removing the business in 1884 to Ave Maria Lane, and subsequently to its present address in Fetter Lane. In the first instance this branch of the business was conducted by Mr. C. J. Clay, who was University printer from 1854 to 1894. It is now managed by his sons, Mr. J. Clay and Mr. C. F. Clay,

## HISTORIC TREASURES

though the publishing imprint of the firm remains C. J. Clay and Sons. At the time of the revision of the Bible in 1870-85, Cambridge was represented by Mr. C. J. Clay and Dr. W. Aldis Wright; Oxford by Mr. Frowde and the Rev. Bartholomew Price.

The Cambridge Press, like that of Oxford, uses its privilege to the full, issuing Bibles and Prayer-books in almost every variety of size and type. One of its historic possessions is a facsimile of the massive Bible, originally



SHIELD OF THE CAMBRIDGE  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

printed on vellum, and splendidly bound, for the use of William IV. The chief interest attaching to this volume lies in the fact that its first eight pages were taken off the press at Cambridge by Lord Camden (then Chancellor of the University), the Duke of Northumberland (High Steward of the University), the Duke of Cumberland, Prince George of Cambridge, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Duke of Wellington, Lord Hardwicke, and the Vice-Chancellor of the University. The Press to-day is also very active in the production of mathematical literature—a branch of printing which obviously calls for exceptional skill; and the Cambridge printers have reason to be proud of their achievements in this direction. Towards the end of the eighteenth century William Ludlum, who published his “Mathematical Essays” and

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

“Rudiments of Mathematics” at Cambridge, complained that the Press was so extremely defective in mathematical types that he was obliged to make many a brass rule himself. This, however, had been fully remedied before 1824, and the collected scientific papers now produced by the Press are worthy monuments of the University’s famous mathematicians. It would make our record wearisome to give a list of the masterpieces of erudition produced under the parental care of the Cambridge Press, but it would not be fitting to omit one of the greatest literary enterprises ever undertaken in this country—“The Cambridge Modern History”—planned by Lord Acton and now being brought to a most successful conclusion.

### THE HOUSE OF LONGMAN

Pride of place among the London publishers belongs by right of seniority to the historic house of Longman, which can boast to-day that it has existed intact under eight monarchs. The house of Rivington, which, as we have shown in the course of our general history, had a few years’ start of that of Longman, was absorbed by the more famous firm in 1890. Thomas Longman I. was born as long ago as 1699, while Dryden was still alive and Dr. Johnson as yet unborn. He was the son of a prosperous citizen of Bristol—a not insignificant point when we remember the close connexion in later generations between Longmans and the illustrious son of Bristol, Robert Southey, together with his local bookseller friend, Joseph Cottle. Young Longman came to London in 1716 as an apprentice to John Osborn, stationer and bookseller of Lombard Street, and in due season, like the good apprentice that he was, married his master’s daughter. His prentice days over, he bought the business of William Taylor, the first publisher of “Robinson Crusoe,” whose address was at the Signs of the Ship and the Black Swan in Paternoster Row, Taylor having amalgamated the two houses with the handsome profits which he drew from



## FOUNDER OF THE HOUSE OF LONGMAN

Defoe's immortal tale. Thomas Longman, buying the business for a sum which, to be exact, amounted to £2,282 9s. 6d., stepped into Taylor's shoes in 1724, and to this day the house which bears his name stands on the site of Taylor's buildings, and still bears as its emblem the signs of the Ship and Swan. The founder of the firm, who was shortly afterwards joined by his father-in-law, was not long in making his influence and energy felt in the book world of London which existed in the days of George I.—a very different world, be it added, from that which we know to-day. One of the meetings, partly for trade and partly for social purposes, which were the custom in those days, resulted in Johnson's "Lives of the Poets," and though the Doctor's Dictionary did not originate in the same way, it was issued under the share system then prevailing among the publishers, Thomas Longman holding a considerable number of shares when he died in 1755, only two months after the publication of the work.

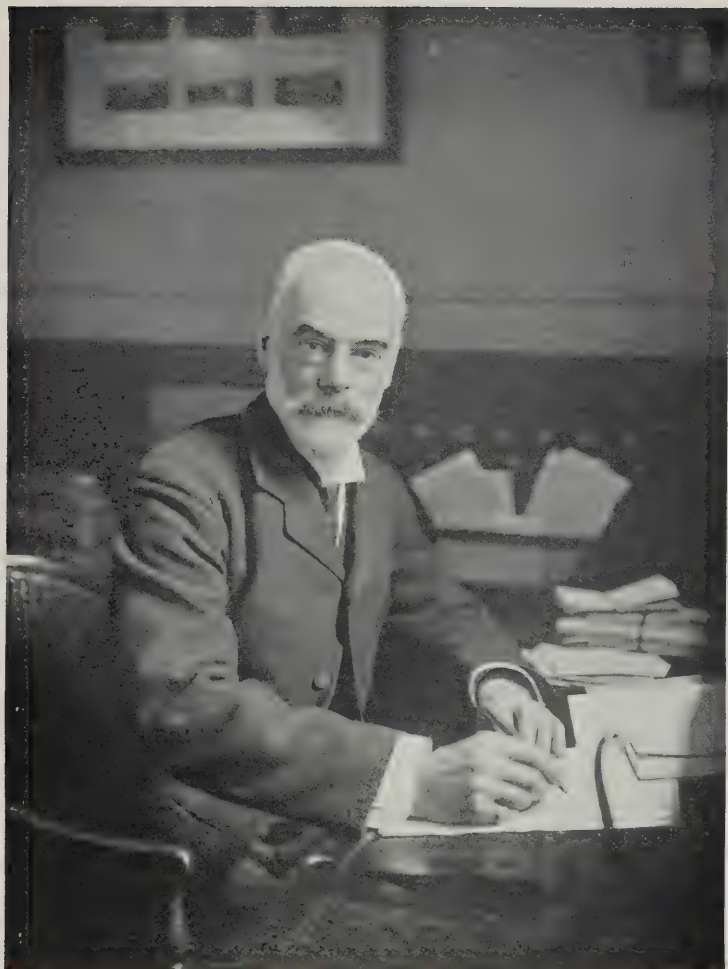
The nephew, Thomas Longman II., who had served his apprenticeship under his uncle, controlled the affairs of the firm until towards the end of the eighteenth century, developing the business, both at home and abroad, on sound if comparatively uneventful lines. He issued, among other enterprises, a new edition of Ephraim Chambers's "Cyclopædia" under the editorship of Abraham Rees. Lindley Murray's "English Grammar," one of the most profitable books ever published, appeared in his lifetime, but it was not until two years after the author's death that Longmans acquired the copyright. This in itself was worth a considerable fortune, for Lindley Murray's "Grammar," after a remarkable run of over a century, is still selling in its seventy-second impression. The second Thomas Longman died in 1797—the eve of the production by the Bristol bookseller of the epoch-making "Lyrical Ballads" of Wordsworth and Coleridge, marking the transition stage in our literary history from the classical school to the school of romance. Thomas Norton Longman (Thomas Longman III.) was already head of the publishing house

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

at the time of his father's death, and he was destined to play a considerable part in the revival of romanticism which, for a time at least, regained for verse the paramount interest of the English reading public. He took Owen Rees into partnership, and bought Cottle's copy-rights when the Bristol man retired from business in 1799, having profited little by his enterprising connexion with the poets. Cottle had been obliged to "remainder" the bulk of the first edition of the "Lyrical Ballads," and when Longmans took over his business the copyright of the book was valued at nil; so that he had little difficulty in obtaining their permission to hand back the copyright to Wordsworth and Coleridge.

Longman might have drawn Byron, as well as Southey and Wordsworth, into his comfortable net had he not declined his "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers" because of its onslaughts on his own poets. The place which Byron might have filled was taken by Tom Moore, who, with the exception of his life of Byron, published all his later books through Longmans. Much might be written of the mutual esteem which marked all the business relations between Moore and his publishers, who set the seal on their connexion by offering the poet £3,000 for "Lalla Rookh" before a line of the book was written. "There has seldom occurred any transaction in which trade and poetry have shone so satisfactorily in each other's eyes," wrote Moore, who, when he found that "Lalla Rookh" was taking him much longer to write than he had anticipated, offered to show his publisher a portion of the work. "We are certainly impatient for a perusal of your poem," replied Thomas Longman; "but solely for our gratification. Your sentiments are always honourable." Fortunately "Lalla Rookh," when it appeared in 1817, proved an immediate and tremendous success.

It was the third Thomas Longman, too, who had direct dealings with Scott, visiting him in the summer of 1802 and purchasing the copyright of the "Border Minstrelsy." A few years later his house published with Constable



MR. THOMAS NORTON LONGMAN  
*Photographed by Reginald Haines*



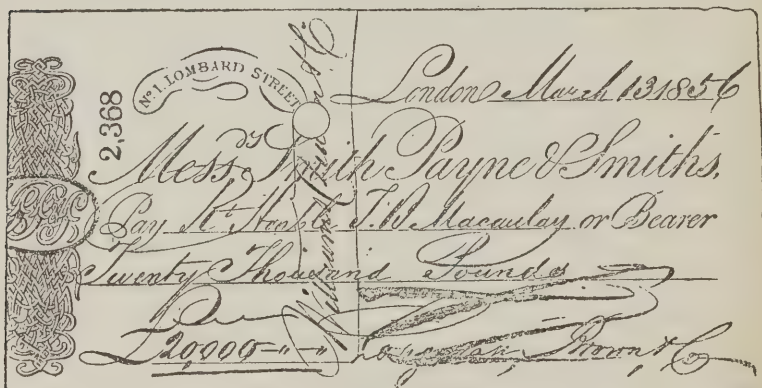
## THE GREAT DAYS OF MACAULAY

"The Lay of the Last Minstrel," Scott standing in on the profit-sharing system. As soon as the first edition was exhausted Longmans offered £500 for the copyright of the work, an offer which Scott accepted, but, as the introduction says, the publishers afterwards "added £100 in their own unsolicited kindness. It was handsomely given, to supply the loss of a fine horse which broke down suddenly while the author was riding with one of the worthy publishers." This worthy publisher, adds Lockhart, was Longman's partner, Owen Rees. When Longman died in 1842 the imprint of the firm had changed to Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, with Thomas Longman IV. and his brother William at the head of affairs. To this reign belongs the great Macaulay epoch, beginning in 1842, only two months after the death of the third Thomas Longman, with the publication of the "Lays of Ancient Rome." Macaulay, little suspecting their pecuniary worth, had made a present of the "Lays" to Longmans, merely stipulating that they should publish them in book form. The publishers returned the copyright as soon as the small first edition had been taken up, and the work must eventually have brought Macaulay and his heirs very considerable sums. In 1843, though hard at work on his "History," and very dubious as to the permanent value of what he regarded as his ephemeral work, Macaulay was forced by the pirated editions in America to authorise Longmans to publish a collected edition of the essays which he had contributed to the "Edinburgh Review." The result, as every one knows, was a book which at once made a place for itself as a popular classic. Sir George Trevelyan's life of his uncle shows by many references how close and cordial was the long association between Macaulay and his publishers. The most famous incident in regard to their business dealings is the cheque for £20,000, dated March 13, 1856, which Longmans paid the author as his share, merely "on account" of the profits of the third and fourth volumes of his "History."



## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

William Longman had a considerable reputation as an historian and an Alpinist as well as a publisher. He died in 1877, and his brother, the fourth Thomas Longman, only survived him two years, being succeeded in 1879 by his elder son, Mr. Thomas Norton Longman, the present head of the house. Associated with him are his younger brother, Mr. George H. Longman, the two sons of William Longman—Mr. Charles J. Longman and



THE FAMOUS CHEQUE PAID TO MACAULAY BY MESSRS. LONGMANS  
"ON ACCOUNT" OF THE PROFITS ON TWO VOLUMES OF HIS "HISTORY OF ENGLAND"

Sir Hubert H. Longman \*—and Mr. W. E. Green, who remains, in point of age and length of partnership, the senior member of the firm. To the above have been added quite recently, Mr. William Longman, the elder son of Mr. Charles J. Longman, and Mr. Robert G. Longman, the elder son of Mr. George H. Longman. Works by such scholars as Froude, Samuel Rawson Gardiner, Max Müller, and Lecky; great undertakings such as the Badminton Library—one of the most successful ventures in modern publishing; the "English Historical Review," which Longmans founded in 1886;

\* Sir Hubert was created a baronet in the last Birthday Honours List of King Edward (1909)—more, it is understood, in recognition of public and political services than of his connexion with publishing.

## THE HOUSE OF MURRAY

the Silver Library, which now includes nearly 200 copyright volumes; the acquisition of Rivington's old business; the "Political History of England," the Lang Fairy Tale series, Mr. Millais' finely illustrated works in natural history, William Morris's collected works, and a long series of educational and scientific books are sufficient proof that the house of Longman maintains the enviable position to which it is entitled as much by its present enterprise as by its great traditions of the past.

### THE HOUSE OF MURRAY

"John Murray" stands among the aristocrats of the trade. You would hardly think so, perhaps, from the outside of the publishing office, for 50A Albemarle Street is a very ordinary-looking house. Yet it has long been one of the most interesting literary landmarks in London. Ghosts of many great men haunt the stairs to Mr. Murray's room, and pass through to No. 50, which is Mr. Murray's private residence. They ought to feel at home in No. 50, for the whole place, apart, of course, from its furniture, is practically the same as in the memorable spring of 1815, when John Murray II. brought about, in his drawing-room, that "mighty consummation of the meeting of the two bards," Byron and Scott. It was in the same room, only seven years later, that the dramatic little conference was held of Byron's relatives and executors, at which, after Tom Moore and John Cam Hobhouse had nearly come to blows, the manuscript of the famous "Memoirs" of the poet was irrevocably burnt. There is the very fireplace in which the work was destroyed. Moore had to borrow £2,000 from Longmans to refund the sum which Murray had given him for the book—Byron having made a present of the "Memoirs" to Tom Moore—but four years later the publisher paid off Moore's debt, amounting, with interest, to over £3,000, and gave him besides £1,600 for his life of the poet, which first appeared in two volumes in 1830. That was only one of many

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

instances of the rare generosity which made the great John Murray a prince of publishers—or the “Emperor of the West,” as he was called by Scott, to whom Murray made the magnanimous surrender of his copyright share of “Marmion.”

The house of Murray has been in existence for nearly a century and a half. John Murray I.—his original name was MacMurray, but he dropped the prefix when he retired on half-pay as a lieutenant of Marines—started as a London bookseller and publisher in 1768, on the site in Fleet Street now occupied by the publishing business of Messrs. George Philip and Son. His modest beginning may be illustrated by the shop-card which he printed at the time :

JOHN MURRAY (successor to Mr. Sandby),

Bookseller and Stationer,

At No. 32, over-against St. Dunstan's Church,  
in Fleet Street,

London.

Sells all new Books and Publications. Fitts up Public or Private Libraries in the neatest manner with Books of the choicest Editions, the best Print, and the richest Bindings.

Also,

Executes East India or foreign Commissions by an assortment of Books and Stationery suited to the Market or Purpose for which it is destined : all at the most reasonable rates.

John Murray I. did little more than lay the foundations of the firm ; and after his death in 1793 his right-hand man, Highley by name, was admitted into partnership with John Murray II., then only fifteen years old. Young Murray came of age in 1801, and two years later the partners agreed to separate, but in a perfectly friendly manner, and drew lots for their house in Fleet Street—“No. 32, over-against St. Dunstan's.” The old home fell to Murray, and here it was in 1812 that Byron used to drop in while



MR. MURRAY'S HISTORIC FIREPLACE, IN  
WHICH THE BYRON MEMOIRS WERE  
DESTROYED

*Photographed by Reginald Haines*





## MURRAY II. AND GEORGE CRABBE

"Childe Harold" was being printed, his great amusement being to make thrusts at the "spruce books," as he called them, which Murray had arranged upon his shelves. Murray moved to Albemarle Street shortly afterwards, and Highley, who had taken a shop at No. 24 Fleet-street, returned to No. 32. It was left to John Murray II. to do more than any other publisher to raise the dignity of his craft. He reminded Byron on one occasion—though their relations generally were of the happiest character—that he forgot in writing to his publisher that he was also addressing a gentleman.

Thomas Moore tells a touching anecdote of Crabbe *à propos* of Murray's relations with that poet. Everybody knows the story of Crabbe's struggles and privations in London before he fell into the friendly hands of Burke, and we have ourselves traced his early fortunes among London booksellers. Moore's letter, written to the publisher himself for the benefit of the poet's son and biographer, relates to the purchase of Crabbe's copyrights by Murray at the time of publishing his "Tales of the Hall":

Though to Crabbe himself, who had up to this period received but little for his writings, the liberal sum which you offered, namely £3,000, appeared a mine of wealth, the two friends whom he had employed to negotiate for him, and who, both exquisite judges of literary merit, measured the marketable value of his works by their own admiration of them, thought that a bargain more advantageous might be made, and (as you, probably, now for the first time learn) applied to another eminent house on the subject. Taking but too just a measure of the state of public taste at that moment, the respectable publishers to whom I allude named, as the utmost which they could afford to give, but a third of the sum which you had the day before offered. In this predicament, the situation of poor Crabbe was most critical. He had seen within his reach a prize far beyond his most sanguine hopes, and was now, by the over-sanguineness of friends, put in danger of losing it. Change of mind, or a feeling of umbrage at this reference to other publishers, might, not unnaturally, it was feared, induce you to decline all further negotiation; and that such was likely to be the result there appeared every reason to apprehend, as a letter which Crabbe had

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

addressed to you, saying that he had made up his mind to accept your offer, had not yet received any answer.

In this crisis it was that Mr. Rogers and myself, anxious to relieve our poor friend from his suspense, called upon you, as you must well remember, in Albemarle Street; and seldom have I watched a countenance with more solicitude, or heard words that gave me much more pleasure, than when, on the subject being mentioned, you said, "Oh, yes, I have heard from Mr. Crabbe, and look upon the matter as all settled." I was rather pressed, I recollect, for time that morning, having an appointment on some business of my own; but Mr. Rogers insisted that I should accompany him to Crabbe's lodgings, and enjoy the pleasure of seeing him relieved from his suspense. We found him sitting in his room, alone, and expecting the worst; but soon dissipated all his fears by the agreeable intelligence which we brought. When he received the bills for £3,000, we earnestly advised that he should, without delay, deposit them in some safe hands; but no—he must take them with him to Trowbridge, and show them to his son John. They would hardly believe in his good luck, at home, if they did not see the bills. On his way down to Trowbridge, a friend at Salisbury, at whose house he rested (Mr. Everett, the banker), seeing that he carried these bills loosely in his waistcoat pocket, requested to be allowed to take charge of them for him; but with equal ill-success. There was no fear, he said, of his losing them, and he must show them to his son John.

It is impossible in the space at our disposal to give even an outline of the splendid record of John Murray II., which will be found set forth in full by Smiles in "A Publisher and his Friends." Perhaps the only great failure of his life was the attempt to run a daily newspaper which was to rival the "Times," and repeat the success of the "Quarterly," which he had founded in 1809 as an antidote to the Whiggism of the older "Edinburgh." Murray was led to make this luckless experiment by the infectious enthusiasm of young Disraeli, then only twenty years old, and in six months buried £26,000 in the venture. Editor and publisher, however, remained intimate friends, and it is appropriate that it should have been left to Murray's grandson to publish the official life of Lord Beaconsfield.

## MR. MURRAY'S TREASURES

Many precious relics of these and later days are preserved at No. 50—the Byron manuscripts, the silver urn which the poet sent to his publisher from Greece, containing some hemlock seeds gathered by Byron at Athens in 1811—they were the direct descendants, he said, of the hemlock which poisoned Socrates—the manuscript of Scott's "Abbot," Burns's *Commonplace Book*; Southey's article on Nelson in the "*Quarterly*," with the additions which transformed it into the book that is now included in every library of reprints; and countless other treasures, including a volume bearing the following touching inscription: "To John Murray, with the sincere acknowledgments of his zealous exertions in the publication of these valuable memorials of a great and good Prince, from his broken-hearted widow, Victoria R., Osborne, December 20th, 1862."

The third John Murray succeeded to the business in 1843, and was only four years old when his father, in 1812, bought the house in Albemarle Street. He is best remembered for the familiar guide-books which have literally carried the name of Murray all over the globe. He started the series with the "*Handbook for Holland*," which he wrote himself in 1836, following this up with three other volumes from his own pen—"France," "South Germany," and "Switzerland." When pressure of business prevented him from writing further volumes he continued the series with the help of various distinguished authors, some of whose works, such as Ford's "*Spain*," have since become classics in their way. The name of John Murray III. is also associated with the fine series of illustrated travel books, which includes such names as Livingstone, Humboldt, Du Chaillu, Bates, Yule, and Mrs. Bishop. He also published Darwin's "*Origin of Species*"—the story of which has been told by the present John Murray in the "*Monthly Review*"—Borrow's "*Lavengro*" and "*Wild Wales*," the great series of dictionaries associated with the name of Sir William Smith, and a host of other works which were sound and

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

scholarly, but without the glamour attaching to so many of the books published by his father.

In the present head the traditions of the house are worthily maintained—as Lord Monkswell remarked at the dinner which the Authors' Society gave to John Murray IV. a year or two ago. Mr. Murray is progressive in his ideas, as well as deeply conscious of and faithful to the reputation of the past. John Murray III. would not touch fiction, but his successor makes a point of including in his list a judicious selection of new novels ; in this respect, as in the general “ get up ” of all his books, keeping pace with the changing tastes and demands of the times. Like his father, he is something of an author as well as a publisher, having edited Gibbon's Autobiography and scores of other works which have issued from his house. An M.A. of Oxford, a D.L. and J.P., and last year High Sheriff for the County of London ; an ex-captain of the Royal Wimbledon Golf Club, and a vice-chairman of the Hospital for Sick Children, Mr. Murray is a man of many interests, and a master of tact and courtesy in all. His son, John Murray V., is now a member of his father's firm.

### THE HOUSE OF SMITH AND ELDER

The story of Smith, Elder and Co.—or “ Smith and Elder,” as it was originally called—follows our histories of the older houses of Longman and Murray almost as a natural sequence in the evolution of the English publishing trade, for George Smith, the founder of the firm, spent part of his apprenticeship under the great John Murray, as well as with Rivington, in the palmy days of that business. George Smith, like the first John Murray, and many other publishers whose names have now become household words—the founders of such firms as Blackwood, Macmillan, Chambers, Black, Blackie, Nelson—was born on the other side of the Tweed, his father being a farmer of Morayshire. He was twenty-





JOHN MURRAY THE FOURTH  
*Photographed by Elliott and Fry*





## SMITH AND ELDER

seven when, in 1816, he launched out as a bookseller and stationer at 158 Fenchurch Street, in partnership with a brother Scot, Alexander Elder, who has been recently commemorated in the biography of Mrs. Brightwen. Three years later the partners embarked in a modest way as publishers, and in 1824 moved to 65 Cornhill, adding to the firm a third member, who brought a business connexion with India, which for a considerable time played a larger share than the publishing department in the flourishing affairs of the firm. Those were still the days of the old East India Company, and the fortunes of the Cornhill house were built up mainly on its export trade to India and the Colonies. Officers of the East India Company not only ordered their books and stationery and other things through Smith, Elder and Co., but gradually came to use them as general agents and bankers. It was a profitable but most curious assortment of enterprises. The firm played a part, for instance, in Lieutenant Waghorn's successful efforts to establish the overland route to India ; they shipped the first electrical plant to the same part of the world ; they would be hard at work at one time fitting out a crack corps of Horse for a little frontier campaign, and at another packing a post-chaise with the latest number of the "Quarterly" or "Edinburgh Review" to catch a fast East Indiaman off Deal.

All this, or much of it at least, was little more than the introduction to the history of the house on its literary side. The first chapter really begins with the entry into the business of the second George Smith, towards the end of the thirties. Hitherto the publishing output, though considerable in bulk, and not undistinguished in some of its items, had languished for lack of a steady policy and proper organisation. George Smith was barely twenty when, at his own request, he took over this department, in 1843, and had the modest sum of £1,500 placed at his absolute disposal to see what he could do to improve matters. His first venture, as he tells us in some reminiscences in the "Cornhill Magazine," was Horne's "New Spirit

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

of the Age," the series of essays in which Mrs. Browning and Robert Bell both had a hand. Then in 1846 came a book which, as the publisher himself remarks, brought him in touch with Leigh Hunt in rather a strange way:

I went to Peckham to dine with Thomas Powell, who, as well as being a confidential clerk in the counting-house of two brothers who were wealthy merchants in the City, dabbled in literature. The merchants were supposed to have suggested to Charles Dickens the Cheeryble Brothers, in "Nicholas Nickleby." Powell afterwards went to the United States and contributed articles of a very personal character to the New York newspapers about English men of letters. While I waited in Powell's little drawing-room for a few minutes before dinner, I took up a neatly written manuscript which was lying on the table, and was reading it when my host entered the room. "Ah," he said, "that doesn't look worth £40, does it? I advanced £40 to Leigh Hunt on the security of that manuscript, and I shall never see my money again." When I was leaving I asked Powell to let me take the manuscript with me. I finished reading it before I went to sleep that night, and next day I asked Powell if he would let me have the manuscript if I paid him the £40. He readily assented, and having got from him Leigh Hunt's address, I went off to him in Edwardes Square, Kensington, explained the circumstances under which the manuscript had come into my possession, and asked whether, if I paid him an additional £60, I might have the copyright. "You young prince!" cried Leigh Hunt, in a tone of something like rapture, and the transaction was promptly concluded. The work was "Imagination and Fancy." It was succeeded by "Wit and Humour," and other books, all of which were successful, and the introduction was the foundation of a friendship with Leigh Hunt and the members of his family which was very delightful to me.

There is a letter in the recently published correspondence of Ruskin which shows that George Smith sent a copy of "Wit and Humour" to the then unknown author of "Modern Painters," the first volume of which had been published anonymously, and with disappointing results, by Smith, Elder and Co. That was a few months before the young George Smith had assumed control of the publishing department. "I ought before to

## GEORGE SMITH AND HIS FRIENDS

have thanked you," writes Ruskin, "for your obliging present of 'Wit and Humour'—two characters of intellect in which I am so immensely deficient as never even to have ventured upon a conjecture respecting their real nature." Ruskin's business relations with the firm lasted for thirty years, and led to a close personal friendship with George Smith himself. It was about this time—in 1846—that the first George Smith died, and the other partners withdrawing not long afterwards, the founder's son, still only twenty-two, found himself sole head of the firm. Young Smith faced the crisis with characteristic courage, and proved himself at once equal to the task. By force of character, and a combination of business acumen and literary instinct which is by no means common, he made an immense success of each department. In 1853 he took into partnership Mr. H. S. King, the Brighton bookseller, whose business was taken over by Messrs. Treacher, and by 1868 the two sides of the house had both developed so enormously that Smith decided to give himself up entirely to the publishing branch, relinquishing the other department to the firm which now bears the well-known name of H. S. King and Co., bankers and East India and Colonial agents, whose City address is still at 65 Cornhill. George Smith moved to the present home of the publishing firm in Waterloo Place in 1869, and only a few doors away, at the corner of Pall Mall, there stands the West End branch of H. S. King and Co., as a handsome reminder of the old relationship between the two houses.

Long before this separation George Smith had made a host of friends in the literary world of his day. His famous association with Charlotte Brontë began as far back as 1847, when the manuscript of "The Professor" arrived at the office from an unknown writer, who gave the signature of "Currer Bell." The story of how the manuscript was declined with a letter which, as the novelist afterwards said, was "so delicate, reasonable, and courteous, as to be more cheering than some

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

acceptances"; how, on this encouragement, she sent Smith the manuscript of "Jane Eyre," which still, by the way, remains in the publisher's family among its most precious literary treasures; how the mysterious author subsequently came to London with her sister and revealed her identity in the publisher's office; and how the rare friendship which resulted stood firm until Charlotte Brontë's premature death brought her to the last of those black milestones which marked her troubled life—will always remain one of the finest chapters in the history of publishing. Charlotte Brontë praised her publisher in the most graceful way by making Smith the original of her Dr. John in "Villette." It was through Smith that Charlotte Brontë came to know Thackeray and George Henry Lewes, and she was able to return the compliment by introducing her publisher to her friends, Harriet Martineau and Mrs. Gaskell, whose works, as a consequence, soon found their way to the same generous hands.

Thackeray's connexion with the house is more famous even than that of Charlotte Brontë. It began with the introduction to him which Smith obtained on behalf of Miss Brontë; Thackeray at the close of Miss Brontë's visit to London in 1850 asked him to publish his next Christmas book, "The Kickleburys on the Rhine." This the publisher did, and in the following year cemented the connexion by paying him £1,200 for the first edition of 2,500 copies of "Esmond." As in all his dealings with distinguished authors, Smith's business relations with the novelist ripened into something equally close and lasting on the social side. This intimacy led to the "Cornhill Magazine," which was originally planned merely as a medium for the serial publication of a novel by Thackeray, though it had long been one of Smith's ambitions to establish a great periodical. His attempts in this regard had so far confined themselves to the Anglo-Indian journals, "The Overland Mail" and "The Homeward Mail"—two papers which, passing with the other Anglo-Indian business to H. S. King and



## THE "CORNHILL" AND THE "P.M.G."

Co., are still in existence. "The Cornhill"—so named by Thackeray after its original publishing address—made its first appearance in January 1860, with Thackeray as its editor at a salary of £1,000 a year. The magazine not only proved an unprecedented success in itself—Smith thereupon doubling Thackeray's salary—but proved a means of bringing to the publishing house many of the illustrious writers and books with which the firm subsequently became identified—the Brownings, George Eliot, for whose "Romola" in its serial and book rights the publisher offered £10,000, Anthony Trollope, John Addington Symonds, Matthew Arnold, whose niece, Mrs. Humphry Ward, like Thackeray's daughter, Lady Ritchie, has carried down to the present generation the old association with the same publishers, and a host of other literary celebrities—and artistic celebrities, too, for the "Cornhill" in those days was illustrated.

Ever ready for fresh conquests, the publisher some five years later ventured into the thorny paths of daily journalism, and with the help of Frederick Greenwood, who became its first editor, established "The Pall Mall Gazette," so named after the journal invented by Thackeray for the benefit of Arthur Pendennis. The story of the "P.M.G.," with its brilliant band of contributors, and of Smith's gallant struggle to place it firmly on its feet, would take up much more space than we can spare. We need only add that in 1880, having succeeded in his costly struggle, he handed the paper over to Mr. Henry Yates Thompson, who had just married his eldest daughter. Of the other ventures of George Smith outside the book world this is not the place to speak, but in some of them, we believe, he was amazingly successful. The greatest of all his undertakings, however, and the finest monument to his memory, is the magnificent "Dictionary of National Biography," carried through to the end on a scale and with a completeness which he knew would cost a fortune and leave no hope of pecuniary reward. The circumstances

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

surrounding this great work are too recent and well known to bear repeating here. Its completion in the summer of 1900, it will be remembered, was celebrated at several public banquets and at a luncheon in Smith's honour at the Mansion House, as well as at a small dinner party which the late King (then Prince of Wales) honoured by his presence. George Smith only lived a few months longer, dying in April of the following year at the age of seventy-seven.

The traditions of the house are worthily upheld by George Smith's successor and son-in-law, Mr. Reginald John Smith, K.C., who joined the firm in 1894, and has been sole active partner since 1899. He made an excellent President of the Publishers' Association in 1904-1905. Son of the late John Smith, of Britwell House, Oxfordshire, Mr. Reginald Smith went from Eton to King's College, Cambridge, and after a distinguished career at the University was called to the Bar, becoming a Q.C. in 1894, and for a number of years assisting the great Sir Charles Russell in his practice. As a publisher he makes a point of knowing all his authors, as well as almost every contributor to the "Cornhill," of which he has been editor since 1897. "If you ask me," he said in the course of an address which he delivered some years ago, "to state in two words the ideal pleasure of a publisher, I will endeavour to do so. It is, in my humble thinking, to win and to deserve confidence alike at the hands of authors and the public." That is an ideal, we might add, which has always governed the conduct and accounted for much of the success of Smith, Elder and Co.

## THE HOUSE OF BLACKWOOD

The early days of the house of Blackwood were associated with the affairs of John Murray II. even more closely than were the beginnings of Smith, Elder and Co., whose principal founder, as mentioned on p. 372,



MR. REGINALD SMITH, K.C.  
*Photographed by H. W. Barnett, Hyde Park Corner*



## THE "BLACK HUSSARS OF LITERATURE"

served part of his apprenticeship with Byron's publisher. The first Blackwood spent his youth in his native Edinburgh, when that historic town—as Mrs. Oliphant says in the annals of "William Blackwood and his Sons," with which she fittingly closed her long and honourable connexion with the house—was at its highest glory as a centre of intellectual life and influence. He won something more than a local reputation as an antiquarian bookseller, after some useful years of experience in Edinburgh, Glasgow, and London, and when the great days of Byron and Scott arrived, had established himself as a publisher on his own account. John Murray, after trying first Constable and then the Ballantynes as his Edinburgh agents, transferred the agency to Blackwood when the young publisher was already rising into note. In 1816 Blackwood, then thirty years old, stepped prominently into literary history by securing with Murray the publication of the first series of "Tales of My Landlord." It had been his highest ambition to become publisher to the anonymous author of the Waverley novels—for he saw clearly through the transparent mystery—but his hopes were realised only to be dashed to the ground. He always took the literary side of his craft very seriously, and when he saw the first sheets of "The Black Dwarf" he ventured boldly to suggest a different conclusion to the story—an alteration probably inspired by Gifford, who seems to have seen the work in proof at Murray's. Scott was furious. "Tell him and his coadjutor," he wrote to his printer, James Ballantyne, who was acting as his agent in the matter, "that I belong to the Black Hussars of Literature, who neither give nor receive criticism." The storm appears to have blown over with the rapid success of the book, but Blackwood's relations with "plausible James" were never very cordial, and with the fifth edition the publication was carried into the hands of Constable. "This," writes Mrs. Oliphant, "was one of those tragically insignificant circumstances which so often shape life apart from any



## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

consciousness of ours. Probably ruin would never have overtaken Sir Walter had he been in the steady and careful hands of Murray and Blackwood, for it is unlikely that even the glamour of the great Magician would have turned heads so reasonable and sober."

The break with Scott, with its temporary triumph for a rival house, and the soreness left by the offensive announcement of the fifth edition long before Blackwood had exhausted the fourth, spurred the rising publisher to take the step which soon led to abundant compensation for the loss even of such a tower of strength as the Laird of Abbotsford. Scott was a giant, but he was not the only literary genius in Edinburgh in those golden days of a hundred years ago; and Blackwood, who had just moved from Old Edinburgh to the more fashionable Princes Street in the New Town, resolved to make use of this talent in a new Tory magazine which should counteract the Whig influence of the "Edinburgh Review." The "Quarterly," which Murray had founded with a similar object in 1809, was not dashing enough for the young bloods among the Scottish Tories. In "Maga," which Blackwood started in 1817, they found a ready outlet for their high and irresponsible spirits. A false start was made, under the title of the "Edinburgh Monthly Magazine," with two incompetent editors; but with the seventh number Blackwood himself took over the editorship, and changed the name to "Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine." With "Christopher North" (Professor John Wilson) and John Gibson Lockhart (soon to become Scott's son-in-law) as his chief supporters, he launched out with a number which at once became the talk of the whole literary world of its day.

The chief cause of the commotion was the famous "Chaldee MS.," the kernel of which was contributed by James Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd, though Lockhart and Wilson, who were both, as Lockhart himself says, "sweeping the boards of the Parliament House as briefless

## THE "CHALDEE MS."

barristers," interlarded it with a good deal of devilry of their own. The "Chaldee MS." was a *jeu d'esprit* which shocked many good Scotsmen as much by its Biblical phraseology as its extravagance of satire. Friends and foes alike were made to figure in this fateful production. Blackwood himself was included—"and his name was as it had been the colour of ebony"—as well as the rival power, Constable, known already as "the Crafty," and "that great Magician which hath his dwelling in the old fastness hard by the river Jordan, which is by the Border." Many of the jokes have lost their point for the present generation, but on the day on which the "Chaldee MS." appeared Edinburgh woke up, Mrs. Oliphant tells us, "with a roar of laughter, with a shout of delight, with convulsions of rage and offence." Scott, when he read it, was almost choked with laughter, but others had less cause for merriment, and did not hesitate to say so. Lockhart and Wilson discreetly betook themselves to "Christopher North's" home in the Lake District as soon as the storm burst. That was the way with these young lions when they had done their roaring; but their editor and publisher faced the storm undismayed, standing like a rock, "writing letters to all concerned, replying at once to indignant publishers, injured authors, and severe lawyers, with a civility and steadiness that never varied—and covering the real culprits with his ample shield."

Unfortunately, the "Chaldee MS." was not the only source of trouble in Blackwood's sensational first number. The opening contribution contained an offensive attack by Wilson upon Coleridge and his "Biographia Literaria"; but the crowning sin was the virulent and unpardonable assault upon the so-called "Cockney School of Poetry," with Leigh Hunt for its chief victim. Lockhart was the anonymous culprit in this case, and Mrs. Oliphant is right in saying that the chief pity of it was that such a man "should ever have been tempted to indulge in abuse so unworthy of himself." From Blackwood's point of

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

view the storm was worth all the writs and threats that were hurled at his head. It had sent up the circulation of "Maga" by leaps and bounds, and Blackwood had at last become a power to be reckoned with. Murray, who had taken a share in the reconstructed magazine, grew nervous for his reputation, but, shrewd enough to see the unexpected possibilities arising out of this excellent, if questionable, advertisement, presently paid a thousand pounds for a half-share in the undertaking. The first "Blackwood gang," however, soon proved too much for the great John Murray. "My hands are withered by it," he complained to his partner, and in January 1819, matters coming to a crisis, his name disappeared from the magazine.

Blackwood stood to his guns without flinching, keeping as firm a hand as he could on his unruly lieutenants, and always on the look-out for another Scott. His early contributors, in addition to those already mentioned, included De Quincey, William Maginn—the "Wild Irishman" immortalised by Thackeray as Captain Shandon—and John Galt, whose first literary success appeared in "Maga." Meantime the publisher was developing the book side of his business, taking shares, as was the custom in those days, in several volumes of Byron, Shelley, and other immortals; sharing Susan Ferrier's novels alone with Murray; and issuing independently such works as Lockhart's novels, Wilson's works, the "Edinburgh Encyclopædia," and many volumes reprinted from the magazine. In 1829 he moved his business from Princes Street to 45 George Street, which has remained to this day the home of the firm and a literary centre of Edinburgh. Five years later the founder of the house died, passing on to two of his sons, Alexander and Robert, the management of a most successful business.

The dual reign led to a less eventful but equally prosperous period. The circulation of the magazine rose to 8,000 a month; Barham and Bulwer Lytton

## THE "BLACKWOOD GANG"

were enlisted; and a London branch was established in Pall Mall—to be transferred five years later (1845) to the present address in Paternoster Row. It was in 1845 that Alexander Blackwood died, and a more interesting chapter began with the return to Edinburgh of John Blackwood, to succeed his elder brother in the editorial chair. John had been managing the branch in London, where his friends included Delane and Thackeray, though Thackeray, like Shorthouse in his experience with Smith and Elder, had once enjoyed the distinction of being rejected by the Edinburgh house, and never became one of its authors. In 1849 John was joined by his soldier brother, Major William Blackwood, who helped to a certain extent to bring together what John called his "Military Staff"—and the military element has always been strongly represented at Blackwood's, the list including such officers as the Hamleys, G. R. Gleig, Lawrence Lockhart, Lord Wolseley (in his captaincy days), Sir Henry Brackenbury (whose "Memories" were issued from the same house not long ago), Sir George Chesney (of "The Battle of Dorking" fame), Major Arthur Griffiths, Sir Frederick Lugard, Lieut.-Colonel Henderson, Lord Kitchener, to mention but a few of the names, to say nothing of such war correspondents as G. W. Steevens, "Linesman," and "Intelligence Officer," the last of whom, Mr. Lionel James, recently disclosed his identity on the title-page of another brilliant piece of work, "Side Tracks and Bridle Paths," also published by Messrs. Blackwood.

The reign of John Blackwood—to return to that earlier chapter in our abbreviated story—was also notable for Kinglake's "Crimea," the long list of novels by Mrs. Oliphant, tales by Charles Reade, Blackmore, Trollope, and many another popular novelist. The crowning glory of all, of course, was the famous association with George Eliot, begun anonymously through George H. Lewes with "Amos Barton," which started its serial course in "Maga" in January 1857. The mystery surrounding



## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

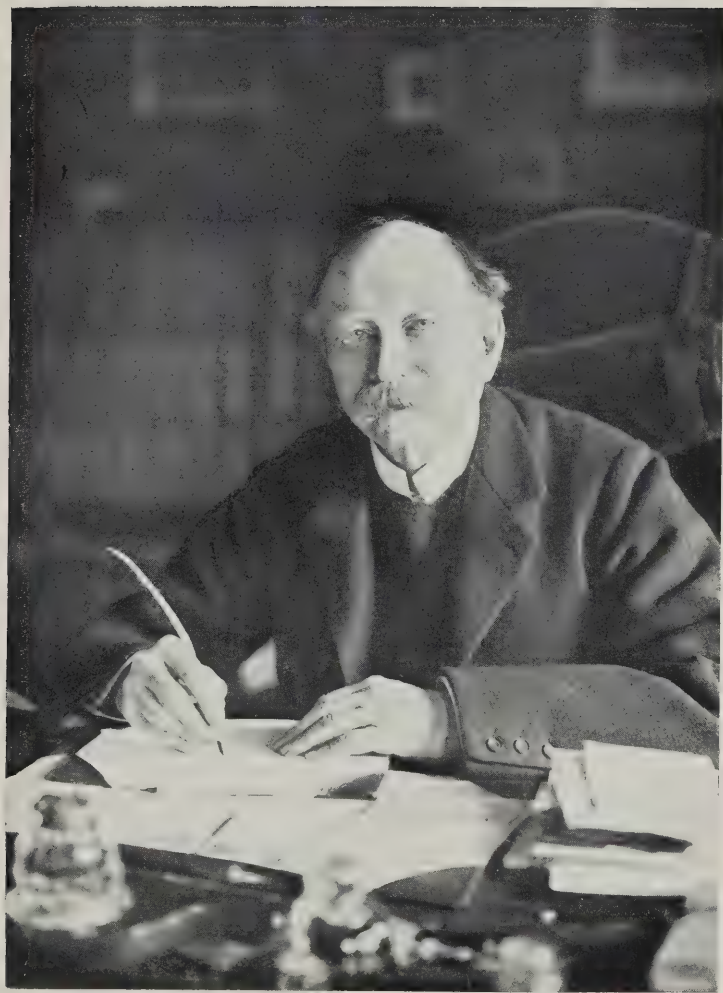
the identity of the author, the part played by Lewes and Blackwood in encouraging her to write, and the firm friendship with the publisher which sprang therefrom, fill a familiar page in literary history.

John Blackwood died in 1879, and was succeeded by his nephew, Mr. William Blackwood, who, having been admitted into partnership shortly after the death of Major Blackwood in 1861, is, happily, still remaining as head of the house and editor of the magazine, in spite of rather more than threescore years and twelve. He is assisted in his business by his two nephews, Mr. George W. Blackwood and Mr. James H. Blackwood, sons of Major George Blackwood, who was killed at Maiwand in 1880. "Maga" under the present rule has remained the heart and soul of the business, and the medium through which many modern reputations have been made. Beatrice Harraden, Sydney Grier, Mrs. Thurston, Joseph Conrad, and Neil Munro are but some of our present-day novelists who have come to the front in its carefully selected pages; and to give a list of the distinguished writers in other departments whose services have been enlisted by Mr. William Blackwood would fill more space than we can spare. We can only add that the record is one of which the publisher has every reason to be proud.

### ADAM AND CHARLES BLACK

The early history of the house of Adam and Charles Black, like that of the house of Blackwood, takes us back to Edinburgh in the heroic days of Sir Walter Scott. When Adam Black laid the modest foundations of his now famous firm in 1807—four years after William Blackwood had started business on his own account in the same city—Scott, by becoming a secret partner in Ballantyne's printing house, had already taken the first step along the slippery path that was to lead to his undoing. It was the younger of the two new publishing firms, which, in





MR. WILLIAM BLACKWOOD  
*Photographed by Reginald Haines*



## ADAM BLACK'S BEGINNINGS

the long run—years after the novelist's death—was to become the proud possessor of the most valuable copy-rights that ever found their way to the open market.

Adam Black was the son of a prosperous builder, and was born in 1784. He was educated first at the High School of Edinburgh, and afterwards—but only for six months—at Edinburgh University, the original intention being to turn him into a clergyman. Adam chose, instead, to become a bookseller, and at fifteen was bound apprentice at the shop of a John Fairbairn, in Hunter Square. His apprenticeship proved, as he himself says, a “dreary, disgusting servitude, in which I wasted five of the best years of my life, with associates from whom I learned much evil and little good.” At the close of his apprenticeship he sought the greater possibilities of London, like not a few young Scottish booksellers who were also destined to make their names in the publishing world. Black was without friends, and had little money to spare when he started to look for work. It was a harder task to find a vacant berth than he had expected, and he was almost at the end of his resources when he earned his first half-guinea from Thomas Sheraton, now famous as one of the old masters of English furniture, then regarded only as a worn-out cabinet-maker and encyclopædist, living in a shop, which was half a dwelling-house—and a dirty one at that—in an obscure street. Adam Black, after little more than a week with Sheraton—almost ashamed to take his half-guinea from the poor man—obtained a more lucrative post at “The Temple of the Muses,” in Finsbury Square, an immense book-selling shop, which in those days was one of the sights of London. It was here that Lackington, Allen and Co. proclaimed themselves to be the cheapest booksellers in the world, with a quarter of a million volumes constantly on sale. The shop on the ground floor was so vast that on one occasion a four-horse coach was driven round the counters. Here Adam Black remained until the time came for him to start a business on his own account. For

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

this momentous event he returned to his native Edinburgh, and, in his twenty-fourth year, opened his first unpretentious shop at No. 57 South Bridge. His pronounced Whiggism and independence in religion—though he was always a man of the sincerest piety—might have affected his prospects in such an intolerant city as Edinburgh in the early years of the nineteenth century, but he was wise enough not to meddle openly in politics for at least ten years, by which time the foundations of his business were well and truly laid. Meantime, for a few years, he had been associated with an old shopmate, Thomas Underwood, in a small London bookshop which they had bought up between them, and this presently led to their purchase of the Fleet Street business of the second John Murray, who, having started the “Quarterly Review,” was removing to his new home in Albemarle Street, leaving with his stock his copyrights of the medical books with which his name as a publisher had hitherto been largely associated. Adam Black was forced into this deal rather against his own judgment, and had to fall back on his father for financial support, as well as on his brother Charles, whom he also persuaded to leave the building trade and take an active share in the bookselling business. Charles Black, having put £1,000 into the concern, proceeded to London, and John Murray’s old place in Fleet Street was taken over by the new firm of Underwood and Black. Only for a short time, however, for Underwood proved an impossible partner to work with, and in 1813 both brothers were glad enough to sell out.

All this time Adam Black’s Edinburgh business had been developing on sound, if unsensational lines. He was gradually expanding the publishing as well as the bookselling side, and when the crash came in 1826, involving the fall of Constable and Ballantyne (Sir Walter Scott’s publishers), and overwhelming poor Scott himself, he was ready to jump into the front rank of publishers by acquiring the copyright of the “Encyclopædia Britannica,” which had been the property of Constable since 1812. The

## PURCHASE OF THE WAVERLEY NOVELS

actual purchase was concluded in 1827, when Adam Black succeeded in completing the necessary capital for this ambitious undertaking by securing three fresh partners, whose shares, however, were all bought in by Black within the next ten years, so that by 1837 the "Encyclopædia" became his sole property. Unconscious of impending disaster, Constable before his bankruptcy had made all arrangements for a new edition (the seventh) of the Encyclopædia, under the editorship of Macvey Napier, who was to receive for his services a total salary of £6,500, to be paid by instalments on the publication of each half-volume. This plan was carried out by Adam Black and his partners in all its details, Dr. James Browne being also engaged as sub-editor, by whom, indeed, the bulk of the editorial work was done.

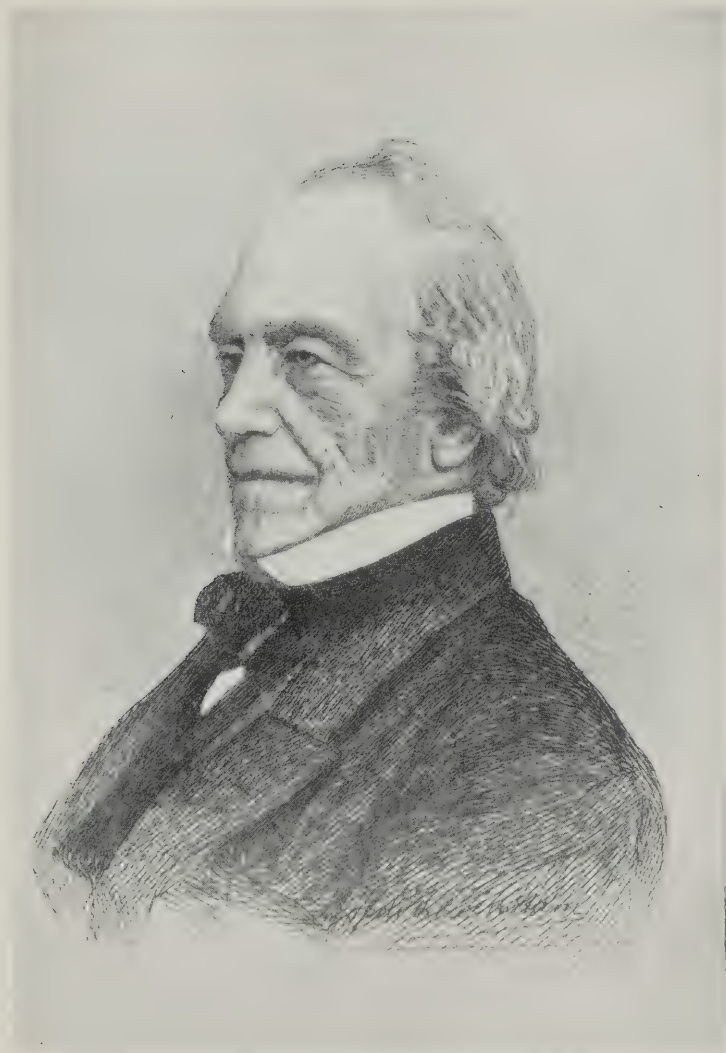
The next landmark in the publishing career of Adam Black was the purchase from Robert Cadell's trustees of the copyright of Sir Walter Scott's Waverley novels and other works for the sum of £27,000. This was in 1851, and in the same year Messrs. Adam and Charles Black—for by that time the founder had taken his nephew Charles into partnership—moved from No. 27 North Bridge to larger quarters at No. 6, on the opposite side of the same thoroughfare. No. 27, it may be added, had been the address for twenty-eight years, Adam Black having gone there from 57 South Bridge in 1823. No further move was made until the firm shifted its headquarters to London in 1889, taking possession of the fine building which has since been its home in Soho Square. The Encyclopædia and the works of Scott, in various new editions, long remained the chief distinction and occupation of Messrs. Black, though they issued many minor works of solid and permanent value, and added considerably to their laurels in 1861 by the acquisition of the copyright of De Quincey's works. Adam Black's interests, by this time, were as deeply absorbed in politics as in publishing, though it is outside of our present purpose to do more than glance at this side of his career. He



## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

lived to be twice Lord Provost of Edinburgh, and incidentally to decline the honour of knighthood for his services in that connexion. "To me," he explained, "the title would only have been an encumbrance; my wife had no desire to be called 'My lady,' and it would only have fostered vanity in my children." It was Adam Black who introduced Macaulay to Edinburgh when the electors had to find a successor to Abercromby—elevated to the peerage as Lord Dunfermline in 1839—and when Macaulay himself was made a peer in 1856 it was Black who succeeded him at Westminster, where he represented his native city until 1865. After his death in 1874—in his ninetieth year—the eminent services of the publisher-politician were recognised by Edinburgh in the erection of a bronze statue to the memory of "one of the noblest citizens she ever possessed" in East Princes Street Gardens.

At the close of 1870 Adam Black had formally retired from the business over which he had ruled for sixty-three years, and handed it on to three of his sons, James, Francis, and Adam, who remained as joint partners for many years. Of these, the only survivor is Mr. James Tait Black, who retired in 1899, the business now being carried on under the energetic management of the founder's grandson, Mr. Adam Black—son of Francis Black, who died some years ago—and his partner, Mr. W. W. Callender. The last generation has seen a striking change not only in the literary taste of the general public, but in many of the methods of the publishing trade. We understand that Scott, though he still commands a sale of which any of our living novelists would be only too proud to boast, has lost some of his popularity of late years. Dickens, alone of the three supreme novelists of the nineteenth century, seems for the moment to be holding his own. Scott's hope for the future lies in the fact that his works are now widely and increasingly adopted for use in schools, for it is not unreasonable to suppose, when this younger generation begins to form a library of its own, that Scott will come into his own again. The



ADAM BLACK IN HIS EIGHTIETH YEAR  
*From the frontispiece to "Memoirs of Adam Black"*



## THE AGE OF COLOUR

only "authentic" edition of Scott is still published by Messrs. Black, who purchased, along with the copyright, the interleaved set of the "Waverley Novels" in which Sir Walter, in his own hand, had noted corrections and improvements almost to the day of his death. This famous set—forty-one volumes in all, discovered many years ago at Cadell's bookshop in Edinburgh—is now among the chief literary treasures preserved at the Soho publishing house, in which, it may be added, also repose the private letters and manuscripts of De Quincey.

To-day the place formerly occupied in the affairs of the firm by Scott and the "Encyclopædia Britannica" is largely taken by the all-popular colour book, in the modern development of which Messrs. Black have undoubtedly been the pioneers. It is a development which has brought them no small amount of flattery in its sincerest form, but no one has succeeded in depriving them of their lead. In this department they have had the invaluable collaboration of Mr. Mortimer Menpes, who has not only illustrated some of the most successful volumes himself, but supervised the printing of the more important volumes in the series to which they belong. Out of the colour books, by a sort of natural process of evolution, has grown a notable gallery of facsimiles of great paintings, with frames which in themselves are reproductions of old masters. The finest compliment that has been paid to this series is the enthusiastic welcome with which it has been received on the Continent—especially in France, where it has been taken up to a remarkable extent in all kinds of educational institutions, the frames in many of these cases being copied from the collection in the Louvre.

Recently, too, a work has been undertaken which is at once a credit to its publishers and a worthy memorial of that other Sir Walter with which their name is closely associated—the late Sir Walter Besant. The great "Survey of London" was left practically complete by Sir Walter before his death. Some of the volumes were

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

written by the author himself, others with the co-operation of a number of friends, who were able to deal with various special aspects of the subject from the standpoint of experts. Another monumental work with which the publishers have been associated in recent years is the "Encyclopædia Biblica," the first volume of which appeared under the joint editorship of Professor Cheyne and Dr. J. Sutherland Black in 1899, and the fourth and last volume in 1903. The biographical annual, "Who's Who," which bears the same imprint, has grown in popularity, as in bulk, ever since its first appearance, and has probably proved one of the most successful books of reference that has been published within the last quarter of a century. Space unfortunately forbids more than a passing reference either to the scientific and educational books for which the publishers have long been noted, or the familiar guide-books which are known throughout the kingdom, but it should be clear, even from the bare outline indicated in this brief sketch, that the house of Black, in spite of its venerable age, is most decidedly moving with the times.

### THE HOUSE OF MACMILLAN

"An aim in life," wrote Robert Louis Stevenson, "is the only fortune worth the finding," and it was a similar conviction which guided the brief and equally brave career of Daniel Macmillan, the founder of the publishing house of Macmillan and Co. We are reminded more than once of Robert Louis Stevenson in reading Thomas Hughes's life of Daniel Macmillan. Each of them became a master of his craft in the face of physical distress which would have broken the hearts of most men; each knew that he was at death's door, or not very far from it, through the greater part of his life; each passed through that inevitable doorway at the same untimely age—forty-four. And yet each found life good and sweet, and did his best to make it so for others. "Glad did I live,



## DANIEL MACMILLAN

and gladly die," is an epitaph fit for Daniel Macmillan as well as for Robert Louis Stevenson.

Born in the Island of Arran in 1813, Daniel Macmillan was one of several sons of a small farmer, who migrated two or three years later to the little town of Irvine, on the opposite coast of Ayrshire, where he died when Daniel was ten years old. The future publisher was barely eleven when he began his apprenticeship with a local bookseller, and served his full seven years "with diligence, honesty and sobriety," before he was eighteen. Then he left home and the mother who had been the sheet-anchor of his life—"the most perfect lady in all Scotland," as he describes her about this time, with the enthusiastic devotion which she seems to have inspired in all her sons. After trying a situation in Stirling, which afforded little scope for his ambition, Daniel spent two useful but strenuous years with a Glasgow bookseller. The disease which eventually carried him off, however, was already showing itself. This and the hard work came near to killing him, and it was only when his mother took him back to his native air that he pulled round.

The end of the whole matter is [he writes in the beautiful letter already quoted] that I think there is nobody like mother in the whole world. If ever I saw any one with the same tenderness, strength, and calmness, the same joyousness of heart, with the same depth, I should instantly fall in love with her, that is if there was any chance of its ever coming to anything! But at present the grave seems the most likely place for me.

After his recovery he found it hard to settle down in Glasgow. He was eager to make his way to the greater world of London, like so many other young Scotsmen, including his friend MacLehose, who afterwards established the well-known business of MacLehose and Sons, publishers to the University of Glasgow, as well as general publishers on their own account. It was to MacLehose, after his first experience of London life at Seeley's in Fleet Street, that he explained his lofty ideal of what a bookseller's calling should be:

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

Bless your heart, MacLehose, you surely never thought that you were merely working for bread ! Don't you know that you are cultivating good taste among the natives of Glasgow ; helping to unfold a love of the beautiful among those who are slaves to the useful, or what they call the useful ? . . . We booksellers, if we are faithful to our task, are trying to destroy, and are helping to destroy, all kinds of confusion, and are aiding our great Task-master to reduce the world into order and beauty and harmony. . . . At the same time, it is our duty to manage our affairs wisely, keep our minds easy, and not trade beyond our means.

Words which should be printed in letters of gold in every bookseller's diary. When he wrote this letter Daniel was himself a bookseller's assistant, earning £80 a year. He had ventured to London in 1833, but finding nothing suitable there had accepted a post at Cambridge, beginning at £30 a year and boarding with his master, Mr. Johnson. London, however, still held out greater attractions for him, and the spring of Queen Victoria's accession-year found him in a situation at Seeley's, who then had their publishing address in Fleet Street. Here his salary rose in six years from £60 to £130, his younger brother Alexander meantime joined him in the same house. Always fretting for independence, Daniel at length launched out with his brother in a small bookseller's shop in Aldersgate Street, and though they did not make great strides there, the venture led, in the autumn of 1843, to the purchase of a more promising business in Trinity Street, Cambridge—"just opposite the Senate House"—on the retirement of Mr. Newby. That was the turning-point in the career of the two Macmillans, and it was largely brought about through the material help and influence of Archdeacon Hare, one of the authors of "Guesses at Truth by Two Brothers"—a book which made so deep an impression on Daniel Macmillan while he was still a shopman at Seeley's that he wrote a letter to the anonymous writers expressing his keen appreciation of the work. The letter pleased the Archdeacon, and presently young Macmillan received an invitation to visit him at Hurstmonceux. The result was a lasting

## THE MACMILLANS AT CAMBRIDGE

friendship which led to Macmillan's introduction to F. D. Maurice, Charles Kingsley, Dean Stanley, and other men who not only influenced his private life, but helped by their books to build up the publishing house. It was the Archdeacon and his brother who lent the Macmillans the £500 which enabled them to buy the business in Cambridge. Here Daniel was at once on the best of terms with the undergraduates and other University men, and, though grievously handicapped by dreadful illnesses, the affairs of the firm prospered exceedingly. It was not long before the brothers were able to take over the business of Mr. Stevenson, the ablest of the older Cambridge booksellers, and to think seriously of the possibilities of running a successful publishing branch in conjunction with the bookselling department. "Our retail trade," wrote Daniel to MacLehose in 1855, "will chiefly be valuable as bringing about us men who will grow into authors. Most of the able young men in the University are our customers, and many of them most kind friends." The scheme worked splendidly. With books by F. D. Maurice, Richard Chenevix Trench and Edward White Benson, two future Archbishops, Lord Kelvin—then known only as W. Thomson, B.A.—John William Colenso, the future Bishop of Natal, Charles J. Vaughan, Dr. Llewellyn Davies, and Isaac Todhunter and Barnard Smith, whose names are known in every school-room in England, a business was developed which justified the saying that it was "founded on Broad Church theology and Cambridge mathematics." In the more venturesome field of fiction the Macmillans were equally fortunate in having the great Charles Kingsley, whose "Westward Ho!" shared with Thomas Hughes' "Tom Brown's Schooldays" the chief honours of those early days.

Meantime Daniel Macmillan had married Miss Orridge, of Cambridge, and the author of "Tom Brown's Schooldays" gives a charming glimpse of the happy but all too brief domestic life which followed. Less than seven years later Daniel Macmillan died, but not before he

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

finished the task which he had so long and gallantly striven to complete. He had the satisfaction of leaving a flourishing business in the able hands of his brother Alexander, and knowing that, whatever happened, he had provided for his wife and children. To the last, his biographer tells us, he retained "a joyousness and playfulness in his intercourse with his family and friends which made it impossible to realise upon how frail a thread his life hung."

The next chapter in the history of the house begins with the establishing of a branch in London, first in Henrietta Street, afterwards in Bedford Street, and then, in 1897, in the present building in St. Martin's Street, Leicester Square—probably the most handsome publishing house in the kingdom. The bookselling business was continued at Cambridge under the name of Macmillan and Bowes, Mr. Robert Bowes being a nephew who was brought down from Scotland in 1846—when he was only eleven—to live with his two uncles and to learn their business. Mr. Alexander Macmillan remained a partner of this firm until his death in 1896, but it is now known as Messrs. Bowes and Bowes, Mr. Robert Bowes having since 1899 carried on the business with his son, Mr. George Brimley Bowes, a graduate of Emmanuel College. The fortunes of the parent house made vast strides in London under the enterprising management of Mr. Alexander Macmillan and Mr. George Lillie Craik (husband of the author of "John Halifax, Gentleman"), who became a partner in 1865 and played an unobtrusive, but all important part in the history of the house down to the day of his death in 1905. The list of authors who have contributed to the success of the firm during the last half-century includes many of the most eminent names in all departments of literature. An old oak table, much treasured by the publishers, bears the autographs of Tennyson, Herbert Spencer, Canon Ainger, John Stuart Blackie, David Masson, Coventry Patmore, and other great men who used to sit round it at Mr. Alexander Macmillan's receptions. "With none of the publishers

## SOME MACMILLAN AUTHORS

into whose hands circumstances had thrown my father," writes the present Lord Tennyson in his life of the poet, "was the connexion so uninterruptedly pleasant as with Messrs. Macmillan, unless perhaps that with Mr. Henry King. Alexander Macmillan's enthusiasm for his authors was especially remarkable." The full story of Mr. Alexander Macmillan's career and literary friendships has been told in the life of the publisher which Mr. C. L. Graves has just written—a work which forms a fitting complement to the memoirs of Daniel Macmillan by Thomas Hughes. It should be added here that Mr. Alexander Macmillan was in 1863 appointed Publisher to the University of Oxford, a post which he held until October 1880, when the delegates of the University Press abandoned the system of employing a private publisher. The University at the same time expressed its appreciation of Mr. Macmillan's service by conferring upon him the honorary degree of Master of Arts.

It would take up much more space than we can spare to give a list of all the literary celebrities who have published with Messrs. Macmillan. In addition to those already mentioned, Archbishops Temple and Tait, Bishop Lightfoot, Deans Stanley, Church, and Farrar, Professor Huxley, Alfred Russel Wallace, Lord Rayleigh, Sir James Stephen, Lord Selborne, Christina Rossetti, Sir John Seeley, Walter Pater, Dr. A. W. Ward, Dr. Aldis Wright, Sir George Trevelyan, Lewis Carroll, Charlotte Yonge, Joseph Henry Shorthouse, whose "John Inglesant" was published by Macmillans after its refusal by James Payn for Smith and Elder, John Richard Green, Mrs. Craik, Lord Morley, who edited the famous first series of "English Men of Letters," and wrote his life of Gladstone for the same house, Lord Avebury, Mr. Thomas Hardy, Mr. George Meredith, Professor Hort, Sir Archibald Geikie, Mr. James Bryce, Matthew Arnold, Mr. Rudyard Kipling, Mr. Maurice Hewlett, Mr. Marion Crawford, Mr. Alfred Austin, Mr. William Black, Mr. Henry James, Mr. Winston Spencer Churchill, as well as the American Winston



## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

Churchill, are but a few of the names associated with this eventful history, but they serve to show how varied, as well as distinguished, have been the literary undertakings of the firm during the last fifty years.

The starting of an American branch in 1869, and the more recent purchase of Bentley's business, helped both to strengthen the position of the firm and extend its operations. The New York branch succeeded so well that it is now an independent concern, known as the Macmillan Company, publishing for many of the best American authors and sending English editions to be issued by Macmillan and Co. in London. The partners of the parent house are still directors of the American company. In 1895, a year before the death of Mr. Alexander Macmillan, the London firm was turned into a limited liability company, its present chairman being Daniel Macmillan's eldest son, Sir Frederick Orridge Macmillan, Justice of the Peace and Deputy-Lieutenant of Hertfordshire, who was admitted to partnership as long ago as 1874, and was knighted by King Edward in 1909 in honour of the opening of the Jubilee Extension Buildings of the National Hospital for the Paralysed and Epileptic, of the board of management of which institution he is chairman. His brother-directors are Mr. George A. Macmillan (son of Alexander Macmillan) who joined the firm in 1879, and is a Justice of the Peace for London, Hon. D.Lit. of Oxford, chief of the Macmillan Clan Society, honorary secretary and one of the founders of the Hellenic Society, honorary secretary from 1886 to 1897, and now chairman of the managing committee, of the British School at Athens, and closely associated with a number of other learned and artistic societies; and Mr. Maurice Crawford Macmillan (Daniel Macmillan's second son), who, after taking his M.A. at Christ's College, Cambridge, was for six years classical master at St. Paul's School.

Sir Frederick Macmillan has been for many years a leading spirit in the English book trade as a whole, as well



SIR FREDERICK MACMILLAN



## HENRY GEORGE BOHN

as of his English and American houses. He was President of the Publishers' Association both in 1900 and 1901, is a trustee of the Booksellers' Provident Association, a member of the Council of the Royal Literary Fund, and to him, and to Mr. Charles J. Longman, was due the inauguration of the "net" system, which is now regarded as the sheet-anchor of the whole trade. The house of Macmillan has lately made another momentous departure in experimenting with the much-discussed sevenpenny novel, and, as a consequence, has not escaped a good deal of trade criticism; but it must be remembered that the same thing happened when the net system was introduced. Time alone can prove whether the sevenpenny copyright cloth-bound novel is also a move in the right direction.

### MESSRS. BELL AND THE BOHN LIBRARIES

The records of two distinguished houses are bound up in the history of George Bell and Sons. Henry George Bohn, whose famous libraries were absorbed in 1864 by Bell and Daldy—as the existing firm was then known—was a remarkable man in several respects, and needs almost a whole chapter to himself. Thanks to the courtesy of one of his descendants, we are able to give some facts relating to his career which have never been published before. His father, John Martin Bohn, was a younger son of a noble Westphalian family, and was at school in Germany with the great Count Metternich. Here young Bohn learnt bookbinding, while Metternich took up shoemaking, in accordance with the good old German law that every German schoolboy, whether the son of a prince or pauper, must learn a trade of some sort. "Who would have thought you would turn your craft to such businesslike account?" said Metternich to Bohn when he met his old schoolmate in London a good many years later. The truth was, apparently, that Bohn, like many another younger son, had to make his own way in the world, and turned to the readiest means of doing so.

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

Coming to London in 1795, he soon won no little reputation by his bindings, inventing what were termed "spring backs" and introducing other improvements. Having moved to 17 and 18 Henrietta Street, he also started a second-hand book business, and received the appointment of Court bookseller. Meantime he had married Elizabeth Watt, a niece of James Watt, of steam-engine fame, Henry George Bohn being born early in 1796.

The son was educated at the expense of George III., and entered his father's business when he was sixteen. His German ancestry and linguistic accomplishments stood him in good stead when he travelled through Europe in search of book bargains for the London business. It was a fortunate period for an ambitious and far-seeing young bookseller. While Napoleon was ravaging the Continent whole libraries were being dispersed by ancient families and religious institutions lest they should fall into the Emperor's hands, and many treasures were picked up in this way by the Anglo-German bookseller. Leipzig was then in its prime as the book mart of the world, and while the guns were booming there in the memorable battle of October 18, 1813, an auction sale was taking place in the market, at which young Bohn was practically the only bidder. He happened to be attending another auction sale at Leipzig while the battle of Waterloo was being fought. Bohn's knowledge of languages was turned to good account in literature as well as in trade, for he published in London, on his own account, before he was eighteen, an English translation from the German of the romance of "Fernandino." Serving merely as his father's right hand did not satisfy his ambition, and shortly after his marriage, in 1831, as his father would not admit him into partnership, he started on his own account at 4 York Street, Covent Garden—a house which had already played a part in English literary annals as the home of De Quincey when he wrote "The Confessions of an Opium Eater."

Bohn's business was founded with £2,000, half of which





HENRY GEORGE BOHN  
*Photographed by Mayall, Brighton*



## THE BOHN LIBRARIES

was lent by his father-in-law, William Simpkin, of Simpkin, Marshall and Co. At first he contented himself mainly with developing an excellent connexion with rare and valuable old books, and gradually built up a fine reputation among ardent bibliophiles. Ten years after starting for himself he was able to issue a guinea catalogue of his treasures, containing 1948 pages and 23,208 items, together with one hundred and fifty-two pages of "remainders." Scenting greater profit in the "remainder" trade—that is to say, the buying up of surplus stock from other publishers—than in rare old books, he devoted himself to this branch of the business with the shrewdness and energy which characterised all his undertakings. He began to buy the copyrights of his remainders as well as the surplus stock, re-issuing at a popular price any book that appeared to be worth the risk. It was not Bohn, however, who started the cheap libraries of standard reprints, an honour which belongs to David Bogue, of Fleet Street, who had already started his "European Library" (in 1845), when Bohn came along with a similar series. Unfortunately for Bogue, he had included in one of his reprints (Roscoe's "Life of Lorenzo de' Medici") a number of illustrations the copyrights of which had previously been bought among his remainders by Bohn. A lawsuit followed which resulted in an injunction against Bogue, and his rival followed up this success by developing his own library so rapidly and skilfully that Bogue at last was forced to retire from the field. Bohn completed his conquest by taking over Bogue's copyrights. The "European Library" was thus incorporated in Bohn's "Standard Library," which succeeded so well that it was followed in 1847 by the "Scientific" and the "Antiquarian" series, the "Classical" being started in 1848, the "Illustrated" in 1849, the "Shilling" in 1850, the "Ecclesiastical" in 1851, the "Philological" in 1852, and the "British Classics" in 1853. Some six hundred volumes altogether—standard works of every country in Europe—were added by Bohn before he retired, after

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

doing "as much for literature," said Emerson, "as railroads have done for internal intercourse." Bohn himself selected most of the volumes included, and the list furnishes striking proof of his immense knowledge of European literature. His linguistic accomplishments—he could speak five modern languages, besides being a Greek and Latin scholar—were here of the utmost service to him, and also enabled him to translate several of the volumes which are still included in the series of "Foreign Classics." He contributed in various ways to many other volumes in his libraries, besides writing for the Philobiblon Society "The Origin and Progress of Printing" (1857) and "A Biography and Bibliography of Shakespeare" (1863). He was also responsible for a "Dictionary of Quotations" (into which he ventured to put several of his own unpublished verses), a "Handbook of Proverbs," and a "Polyglot of Foreign Proverbs" for his Antiquarian Library, a "Pictorial Handbook of Modern Geography," and a "Guide to the Knowledge of Pottery and Porcelain" for the Illustrated Library, and "A Handbook of Games" for the Scientific Library.

Bohn's knowledge of old books—well displayed in his edition of Lowndes's "Bibliographer's Manual"—brought him in touch with many distinguished men. His advice was often sought by such great collectors as the Duke of Hamilton and "Vathek" Beckford, and on more than one occasion he was consulted on everyday matters by the Prince Consort. He was chairman of the committee appointed for the Printed Books Department of the 1851 Exhibition. Gladstone, who had a high opinion of Bohn's abilities, offered him a baronetcy, but we are told that the publisher declined the honour on principle. Bohn tired of his success in 1864, when his sons preferred other professions to following in his footsteps, and sold the whole stock and copyrights of his libraries to Messrs. Bell and Daldy for about £40,000. His principal copyrights in other departments were taken over by Messrs. Chatto and Windus for another £20,000 while his

## GEORGE BELL AND HIS VENTURES

second-hand books, which subsequently took forty days to dispose of at various auction rooms, realised a further £13,000. We are not here concerned with the later career of Henry George Bohn; nor with the wonderful collection of art treasures which he accumulated and catalogued in a work that took him, with his daughter, over two years to complete; nor the rose fêtes in the garden of his fine old house at Twickenham, attended by Dickens, Cruikshank, Rosa Bonheur, and many other celebrities. He lived to the ripe old age of eighty-nine, vigorous and industrious to the last; and is sure of a place in any history of the "Great Trade" as one of the "lettered booksellers" of the nineteenth century.

The advent of Bell and Daldy brings us to the history of the house in which Bohn's Libraries now form only part of a much larger business. The house itself dates back to 1838, when George Bell, after serving his apprenticeship with Whittaker and Co., booksellers and publishers, of Ave Maria Lane, began business for himself in Bouverie Street. Like H. G. Bohn, George Bell, who was a native of Richmond, Yorkshire, was the son of a bookseller, and a man of scholarly tastes. He started his publishing career with the annotated series entitled "*Bibliotheca Classica*," in which his old employers, Messrs. Whittaker, had a share. The series did well from the first, and the publisher followed it up with books of educational, architectural, and religious interest. He was joined in 1855 by Mr. F. R. Daldy, from Rivington's, and together they took over many of the joint publications of William Pickering and the Chiswick Press, including the "*Aldine Poets*," known to every book-lover of a generation or so ago. Messrs. Bell still print at the "*Chiswick Press*," among the recent series from which have been "*The Chiswick Library of Noble Authors*," and the thirty-nine charming volumes of "*The Chiswick Shakespeare*." George Bell launched out in other directions by starting a business in Brighton, and becoming proprietor (for some years) of the business of Deighton, Bell and Co., of Cambridge,



## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

whose well-known mathematical connection helped him to start the "Cambridge Mathematical Series," with which the London house has been so long and honourably associated. The turning-point in the firm's career, however, came with the purchase of Bohn's libraries in 1864. Messrs. Bell and Daldy had already moved from Bouverie Street to 186 Fleet Street. They now succeeded Bohn at his York Street address, where they not only extended their own business, but revised and enlarged the libraries which had made their predecessors' fortune. There are now not far short of 800 volumes in these familiar series, the crowning addition to which has been the new "York Library," in which Messrs. Bell are including thin-paper editions of many of the latest reprints of their standard works.

The partnership between George Bell and F. R. Daldy was dissolved in 1872, and the founder's two sons, Mr. Edward Bell and Mr. Ernest Bell, both M.A.'s of Cambridge, were admitted to the firm. George Bell died in 1890, a publisher with a high reputation throughout the trade, and a gentleman who gave up much of his spare time to quiet deeds of philanthropy. The business has made great strides in all departments under the enterprising management of his sons. To begin with, the firm has within the last few years moved from its cramped and rather dingy quarters in York Street, Covent Garden (De Quincey's old home, by the way, being now given up to horticultural sundries), to the really handsome building known as York House, Portugal Street. An artistic house was essential to a firm which had made remarkable headway as Fine Art publishers, for it is on this side of its business, perhaps, that Messrs. Bell have scored their chief successes in recent years. "The Great Masters" series, "The Miniature Series of Painters," "The British Artists," "Great Craftsmen," "Art Galleries of Europe," and other series, in addition to many fine books by Mr. Walter Crane, the late Lady Dilke, Dr. Williamson, Mr. Bernhard Berenson, and the new edition of Bryan's



MR. EDWARD BELL

*Photographed by Barclay Bros., Mark Lane*



## WHERE "PICKWICK" WAS BORN

"Dictionary of Painters," have given Messrs. Bell a reputation in the art world as high as that which they have gained in the world of scholarship and letters. Illustrations have also been made to play a useful part in many other admirable series which they publish. Of these, unfortunately, we have only room to mention the "All England" series of handbooks, the "Miniature Series

Great Writers," the "Illustrated Classics," "Bell's Science Series," the "Cathedral Series," the "Technological Handbooks," and the "Miniature Series of Musicians."

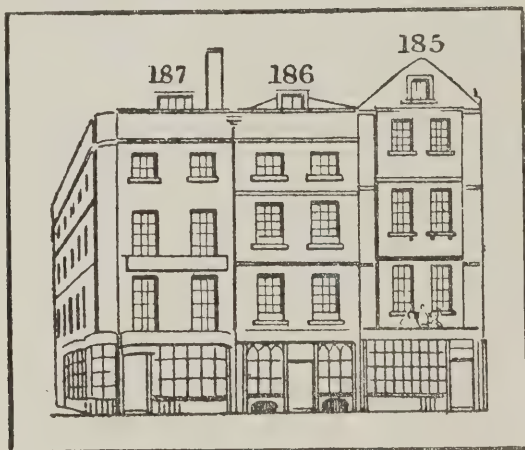
Mr. Edward Bell has himself added several books to his libraries, notably translations of Goethe's "Early Letters," and "Wilhelm Meister's Travels," the last of which is the only complete version of Goethe's novel in the English language, and (in conjunction with Miss Horton) of the "Nibelungenlied. In the general affairs of the publishing world Mr. Edward Bell has long taken a most active and influential part, and his strong, successful reign as President of the Publishers' Association during the critical years of 1906-8 will not soon be forgotten.

## CHAPMAN AND HALL

Not many of the thousands of people who hurry along the Strand every day are aware that the corner of Arundel Street, now filled by the substantial headquarters of W. H. Smith and Son, is intimately associated with the early literary days of Dickens. Here, at No. 186—about the middle of the present block of buildings—stood the little publishing house which first gave "Pickwick" to the world—a house then recently established by Chapman and Hall, two energetic young men whose names are now as closely allied to Dickens and his works as is that of John Murray to Lord Byron, or Smith and Elder to Thackeray. The story of Dickens's first piece of literature to find its way into print—"A Dinner at Poplar Walk," afterwards included in "Sketches by Boz" as

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

“Mr. Minns and his Cousin”—how he dropped it by stealth “in a dark letter-box in a dark office up a dark court in Fleet Street,” and almost wept with pride when it appeared in all the glory of type, is one of the familiar anecdotes of literary history. That was in 1833, in Dickens’s reporting days, and the man who sold him the momentous number of the magazine was none



No. 186 STRAND, THE ORIGINAL HOME OF  
MESSRS. CHAPMAN AND HALL

WHERE “PICKWICK” WAS FIRST PUBLISHED. (THE HOUSE  
HAS SINCE BEEN SWALLOWED UP BY THE HEADQUARTERS OF  
W. H. SMITH AND SON, AT THE CORNER OF ARUNDEL STREET.)

other than William Hall, one of his future publishers. How firmly the incident was stamped on his memory is shown in the fact that when William Hall called at his chambers in Furnival’s Inn some two years afterwards, with the proposal which was to lead to the immortal “Pickwick,” he recognised the bookseller at once, though he had never seen him either before or since. Young Hall—or “Little Hall,” as Mr. Percy Fitzgerald tells us he was more familiarly called—was the junior partner in the publishing firm established with Edward Chapman in 1834. As publishers they began with a



## DICKENS AND HIS PUBLISHERS

number of enterprises which John Forster describes as inglorious rather than important, including a library of fiction, which had for its editor the wayward genius, Charles Whitehead. Whitehead, himself an "Old Monthly" man, was a great admirer of Dickens's contributions to that journal, collected with similar articles from the "Chronicle," and published early in 1836 as "Sketches by Boz"—and had secured from him for his own series "The Tuggs at Ramsgate."

In November 1835, Chapman and Hall published "The Squib Annual," with plates by Robert Seymour, and anxious to follow this up with a similar series of cockney sporting pictures in shilling numbers had asked Whitehead to write the letterpress. Whitehead, writes his biographer, Mr. Mackenzie Bell, declined the commission on the ground that he was not equal to the task of producing the copy with sufficient regularity, and it was on his recommendation that Dickens was chosen for the task. Hence the famous interview at Furnival's Inn, resulting, as every one knows, in Dickens's acceptance on the understanding that he should have a free hand in the choice of subjects and characters, and that the sketches should illustrate the text—not, as suggested by the publishers, that the text should merely be a running accompaniment of the pictures. Dickens was only twenty-four when the first part appeared in April 1836, and he considered himself on the high road to fortune with the addition to his journalistic income of the £14 which the publishers had agreed to pay for each monthly instalment. "The work will be no joke," he wrote to "My dearest Kate," "but the emolument is too tempting to resist"; and on the strength of it he celebrated the appearance of Part I. by getting married. But "Pickwick" was not at first the great success which its author and publishers had hoped. All sorts of unexpected difficulties cropped up. Seymour died by his own hand before the second number appeared, and it was some time before his place was filled by the fortunate choice of Hablot K. Browne ("Phiz").

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

Forster tells us that it was not until the fourth and fifth number (in the latter of which Sam Weller makes his first appearance) that "Pickwick's" importance began to be understood by "the trade," but from that time onward all doubt was removed, and the publishers, whose chief difficulty now was to cope with the demand, were so satisfied with their bargain that eventually they paid the author a considerable sum over and above the terms agreed upon.

Literary success rarely comes without its attendant worries, and Dickens soon found himself in the toils of rival publishers. "He would have laughed," writes Forster, "if, at the outset of his wonderful fortune in literature, his genius acknowledged by all without misgiving, young, popular, and prosperous any one had compared him to the luckless men of letters of former days, whose common fate was to be sold into a slavery which their later lives were passed in vain endeavours to escape from. Not so was his fate to be ; yet something of it he was doomed to experience. He had unwittingly sold himself into a quasi-bondage, and had to purchase his liberty at a heavy cost, after considerable suffering." The difficulties, it must be confessed, were largely of his own making. Full of hope and enthusiasm, he had eagerly snatched at the tempting baits offered by Richard Bentley, the enterprising publisher of New Burlington Street, who, quick to grasp the potential value of the rising star, had engaged him as editor of a new monthly magazine—"Bentley's Miscellany"—for which Dickens was also to write his next work, "Oliver Twist"; and, not long afterwards, secured him still further with an agreement by which Bentley should also secure his third and fourth books. It is difficult now to understand how Chapman and Hall could have allowed Dickens so easily to slip through their fingers ; but it must not be forgotten that "Pickwick" had not, at first, been a conspicuous success, that the new publishers were young in experience, and that Bentley was one of the shrewdest men in the trade.

## DICKENS'S AMAZING PROGRAMME

The result was that Dickens, while finishing the last half of "Pickwick" for Chapman and Hall, had to turn out similar monthly instalments of "Oliver Twist" for Bentley, edit and write occasional papers for the new magazine, prepare "Barnaby Rudge," which he had engaged to supply in a complete form at an early date, and, in addition, edit the Memoirs of Grimaldi for the same publisher. Truly an amazing and impossible programme, even for that astonishing young genius. No wonder, as the time approached for beginning "Nicholas Nickleby," which Dickens had undertaken to write for Chapman and Hall as a successor to "Pickwick," that he complained of a sense of "something hanging over him like a hideous nightmare."

It would take too long to tell how, with the help of Forster's friendly mediation, he at length succeeded in escaping from the meshes of the net in which he had been too ready to become entangled. Much negotiating and not a little wrangling with Bentley ended in the novelist's retirement from the editorial drudgery of the "Miscellany," and his recapture by Chapman and Hall, who advanced the £2,500 which enabled Dickens to purchase from Bentley the copyright and stock of "Oliver Twist" and cancel his engagements with that publisher not only for "Barnaby Rudge" but for the third tale which he had agreed to write for him. Chapman and Hall still further strengthened their hold upon Dickens by helping him out of his entanglements with Macrone, the young publisher-friend to whom the novelist had sold the copyright of "Sketches by Boz" for a conditional payment which Forster puts at £150—though Mr. Fitzgerald estimates it, all told, at £350—and who threatened to re-issue the work in monthly parts as soon as the author had made his great name with the serial publication of "Pickwick" and "Oliver Twist." Chapman and Hall shared with Dickens the £2,000 which Macrone demanded as a sort of unearned increment before he could be bought out.

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

Some years later, in 1844 to be exact, it was the turn of Chapman and Hall to be bought out by Bradbury and Evans. There had been a strange falling off in the sales of "Martin Chuzzlewit"—probably due, to a certain extent, to the author's recent withdrawal to America—and an indiscreet suggestion by Hall, whose premature fears made him speak too openly of safeguarding the interests of the firm, so wounded the sensitive Dickens that he lent a ready ear to the advances of Bradbury and Evans; and further disappointment with his profits from the enormous sales of the "Christmas Carol," published but a few days before the following Christmas, settled the matter. On June 1, 1844, he signed an agreement with Bradbury and Evans by which, upon advance made to him of £2,800 he assigned to them a fourth share in whatever he might write during the ensuing eight years, though no obligations were imposed as to what works, if any, should be written, except that a successor to the "Carol" should be ready for the Christmas of 1844. Dickens remained with Bradbury and Evans until 1859, when a bitter personal dispute with them sent him back to the publishers associated with his first success. It is sad to think that the younger partner, William Hall—the man who had sold him the historic copy of the "Old Monthly"—should have died during this long business estrangement. His funeral in the spring of 1847 was attended by Dickens, whose old regard for the publisher had survived the temporary cloud, leaving remembrance only of much kindly intercourse. From 1859 all his copyrights were reserved for Chapman and Hall, and there was never any further question of a separation. Indeed, to quote Forster's Life, "in any points affecting his relations with those concerned in the production of his books, though his resentments were easily and quickly roused, they were never very lasting."

Edward Chapman retired in 1864—by which time the<sup>22</sup> business had been removed from 186 Strand to 193<sup>23</sup> Piccadilly—and was succeeded as head of the firm



FREDERIC CHAPMAN [1823-1895]





## “FORTNIGHTLY” EDITORS

by his cousin Frederic Chapman, who had joined the staff in 1841, and taken William Hall's place on the death of the junior partner six years later. Frederic Chapman became the moving spirit in a vigorous and far-seeing policy, which vastly improved the firm's position. "An excellent fellow he was," writes Mr. Fitzgerald, "somewhat blunt and bluff, but straightforward and good-natured. He had a small but delightful house in Ovington Square, to which some one had added a billiard-room, which he turned into a charming dining-room. What tasty Lucullus-like dinners were given there! I cannot say how he managed the firm, but when Dickens was alive he tried to meet his wishes in every conceivable way. Forster, too, he looked up to almost reverently. . . . I recall my first visit to the firm in Piccadilly. John Forster was with me, who strode in all important, 'as though the whole place belonged to him.' I was struck with the general stately look—the bustle—the number of clerks hurrying about. Forster was received with infinite respect, for he dictated all things." Dickens's biographer continued as literary adviser to Chapman and Hall until 1860, when he was succeeded by George Meredith, then only thirty-two.

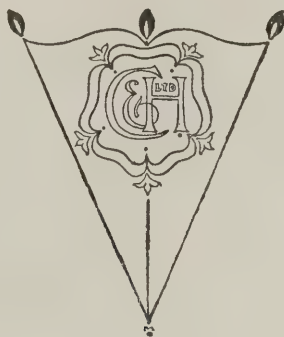
In 1865 Frederic Chapman founded the "Fortnightly Review," which, in spite of the alleged slump in periodicals of all sorts, retains its high position, and remains to this day among the soundest assets of the firm. The first editor was George H. Lewes, who was succeeded in 1867 by Lord Morley—then, of course, plain Mr. John Morley—when the fortnightly publication became a monthly event. Lord Morley's memorable editorship—broken only by his absence in America, during which his place was filled by George Meredith—lasted until 1883, when he was succeeded in turn by Mr. T. H. S. Escott, Mr. Frank Harris, and Mr. W. L. Courtney, the last of whom has worthily maintained the best traditions of the "Fortnightly" since 1894. In 1880 Frederic Chapman turned the business into a limited company, and not long

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

afterwards bought for it the copyright of the works of Carlyle, whose death occurred in 1881. They had been Carlyle's publishers for many years—ever since they had brought out "Past and Present" for him in 1843, to be exact. Six years later, "Sartor Resartus" came into their net—that wonderful book which, after being offered and declined in succession, by Murray, Longmans, and Colburn and Bentley, had to wait until 1838, when the author had firmly established his fame with his "French Revolution" before any firm would venture on its own account to publish the work in volume form. Carlyle's later books were all issued by Dickens's publishers. George Meredith's association with Chapman and Hall began with the publication by them of "The Shaving of Shagpat," and after succeeding Forster as literary adviser in 1860, he was for over thirty years a ruling personality of the firm. The remarkably interesting article which recently appeared in the "Fortnightly" on "George Meredith as Publisher's Reader," written by Mr. B. W. Matz, the editor of the "Dickensian," shows not only how ready was Meredith always to help and encourage an author whenever a manuscript pleased him, but also how extremely high was his standard of merit. "Only about a dozen years have elapsed since he relinquished his post as reader," writes Mr. Matz, "and yet one wonders what his opinion would have been on many of the books that are published to-day, and obtain such popularity. To say he was difficult to please is to understate the fact. His standard was tremendously high, and from that pinnacle his judgment was right and sound. But some doubt may be expressed as to whether the standard was the right one to judge a book for commercial purposes." His rejection of "East Lynne" is perhaps the strongest case in point, though to the other side of his account must be placed such discoveries as Olive Schreiner's "Story of an African Farm." His own novels, with three or four exceptions, were all issued by the same house right down to 1895.

## SCOTTISH PUBLISHERS

In March 1881, a month after Carlyle's death, the publishers moved to their more comfortable home in Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, where they have remained ever since.



MESSRS. CHAPMAN AND  
HALL'S DEVICE

### THE HOUSE OF BLACKIE

Our history has shown that there is probably no class of business in the kingdom which is more exclusively a London trade than the business of book-publishing. Practically all modern books published in Great Britain bear upon their title-page a London imprint, no matter where they may have been printed or bound. This custom is apt to obscure the fact that there are many publishing houses whose headquarters are not in the metropolis. Some of the oldest and largest, as we have already stated, have their headquarters in Scotland. The firm of Blackie and Son, although its publications all bear the imprint "London," and are placed first on the London market, has its headquarters in Glasgow, whence it has carried on its business for the respectable period of just over one hundred years. Founded in the epoch-making years of the early nineteenth century, the house of Blackie is only two years younger than the equally well-

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

known firm founded in Edinburgh by Adam Black, and six years younger than that other historic publishing house in the same city—the house of Blackwood. The year 1809, in which the Glasgow publishing business was founded by John Blackie—the grandfather of the present directors of the company—was also the year of Corunna, when Glasgow's heroic soldier-son won for himself immortal fame; and it is interesting to find that one of the early publications of the young Glasgow firm was a reprint of the "Travels in Italy" of Dr. John Moore, who, in addition to being a popular author, traveller, friend of Smollett, and correspondent of Burns, was the great Sir John Moore's father, a fact which naturally helped the sale of the book tremendously.

At first the firm confined its attentions to the literary needs of Scotland, but soon widened its sphere of influence and by the year 1830 had its own office in London. That Glasgow could at that early date support a large publishing house seems rather remarkable, if we consider merely its population, which was then about 100,000—it was only 45,000 in 1782, when the original John Blackie was born—but there is less reason for surprise when we bear in mind that Glasgow, with its ancient University, had been a home of learning since the Middle Ages, and that the Scots were in the main, even in those days, an educated and reading people. We have but to remember that the Foulis brothers, the great eighteenth-century printers, were a Glasgow firm, in order to realise that the city of the West had already earned for itself the position it has held for a century at least as one of the three chief centres of book-production in Britain, coming only after London and Edinburgh.

The Blackie firm has from the beginning made a strong feature of works of a serious or educational character—technical treatises, dictionaries, and the like—as well as of finely illustrated books and "belles-lettres." Christopher North was one of their early authors, contributing his



## CHRISTMAS BOOKS

essay on the life and character of Burns to the Blackie edition of the poet's works—a beautiful and still much-prized edition, to illustrate which the artist, D. O. Hill, was commissioned to paint sixty pictures in oil for reproduction by the process of steel engraving. It took the artist five years to complete the commission. How different this from the modern quick methods of photography and process blocks! In 1836 the firm published the complete works of James Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd, by arrangement with the poet. There is still lying in its archives an unpublished drama by Hogg, which for some reason or other was withheld from publication at the time, and has ever since reposed peacefully in the safe. The well-known “Ogilvie's Imperial English Dictionary” (in its current edition edited by Dr. Charles Annandale) was an undertaking of the early forties. Thenceforward the character of the publications have to a certain extent changed with the times; but books of reference, technical works, and educational books have continued among the leading features. And the reputation of the house for Christmas books is second to none. The tales of Henty, Manville Fenn, Rosa Mulholland, Captain Brereton, Alexander Macdonald, Staff-Surgeon Jeans, and the others whom boys and girls delight in, have carried their imprint all over the world. London has been for long their headquarters of distribution—of publishing proper. Their first London manager, Mr. James Martin, was succeeded by his son of the same name, a man well known to, and highly esteemed by, the whole trade. On his death, some ten years ago, the post was taken by the present manager, Mr. Walter Symons, who represents the company on the Publishers' Association.

John Blackie, Senior, the founder of the firm, was a man of wide outlook, and as early as 1816 started his own binding department and allied himself with Mr. Edward Khull, printer. At a later date, 1829, he took over the printing works of Messrs. Andrew and J. M. Duncan,

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

printers to the University, from which time the firm has done all its own printing and binding. Mr. Blackie was joined in 1826 by his son, John Blackie, Junior (afterwards Lord Provost of Glasgow), and still later by his other two sons, W. G. Blackie, Ph.D. of Jena, LL.D. of Glasgow (afterwards Lord Dean of Guild of Glasgow), and Mr. Robert Blackie. John Blackie, Senior, died in 1874, at the age of ninety-two. His eldest son, John Blackie, Junior, predeceased him by one year. In the years that followed, the present directors, Mr. John Alexander Blackie (chairman), Mr. James Robertson Blackie, and Mr. Walter W. Blackie, B.Sc., were made partners. Mr. Robert Blackie died in 1896, and Dr. Blackie ten years later—like his father an old man of over ninety years. The firm was formed into a private limited liability company in 1885, though it has remained practically a “family” business. With its headquarters in Glasgow, its chief distributing centre in London, its factory in Dublin for the manufacture of books for Irish schools, its branch offices or agents in India, Africa, Australia, and America, the publications of Messrs. Blackie and Son now find their way into every part of the Empire.

## THE HOUSE OF CASSELL

Time was when La Belle Sauvage Yard rattled to the tune of pack-horse and coach, or gave itself up to an evening's entertainment at the hands of a company of players. For many actors in the early days of the English stage judged themselves lucky if they could secure a galleried inn for their performances. To-day the yard resounds only to the prosaic hum of throbbing printing presses, or the clatter of vans laden with the newest books, or maybe the latest issues of some of the thirty or so serial publications which are turned out by Messrs. Cassell with the regularity of a daily newspaper. It probably gave an extra fillip to John Cassell's zeal when he came with his temperance enthusiasm to La Belle Sauvage at the middle of

## THE "MANCHESTER CARPENTER"

last century to know that he was superseding the old traditions of the yard with other and more sedate associations. The really interesting thing about Cassell's temperance views was that John was himself an innkeeper's son, having been born in 1817 at the Ring o' Bells, in the Old Churchyard, Manchester, where his father was the landlord. The origin of the sign of "La Belle Sauvage" has given rise to many picturesque and plausible theories, but the fact seems to be that the inn was originally called the "Bell," and presently came to be known also as Savage's Inn, with the result that somehow the two names eventually became inextricably mixed. After many vicissitudes, the old inn was demolished in 1873 to provide for the growing needs of the great printing and publishing firm then running under the joint names of Cassell, Petter and Galpin. This, however, is to anticipate.

John Cassell, the founder of the house, owed his success entirely to his own untiring energy. He began life seriously as a carpenter—after two false starts in a cotton mill and a velveteen factory—and was then swept into the teetotal movement. It is difficult in these more sober days to realise the frightful drinking habits which prevailed some seventy or eighty years ago. Nowhere were they worse than in the Midlands. Never half-hearted about anything, the new recruit—the "Manchester Carpenter," as he came to be known—was soon a familiar figure on the platform at teetotal meetings. "Young, bony, big, and exceedingly uncultivated," as he is described by Thomas Whittaker, one of the pioneers of the movement, he took up the cause with his whole heart and soul. He was only twenty when he left Manchester for London, tramping every inch of the way for lack of funds, and turning the journey into a temperance tour by delivering public addresses in the towns and villages on the way. In London, fortunately, he fell among Friends, and the Quakers helped him materially after he had been enrolled among the lecturers of the

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

National Temperance Society. It is no part of our purpose to describe his wanderings up and down the country, with his watchman's rattle to call his audience together, and his broad Lancashire dialect to let every one know that there was little doubt about his being the well-known "Manchester Carpenter." His earnestness of purpose and intense enthusiasm were allied to a mind bent on self-improvement, and by careful reading he not only made himself acquainted with much that was best in English literature, but acquired no mean knowledge of the French language. At the end of his teetotal lectureship John Cassell, now a happily married man, started a tea and coffee business in the City, with headquarters successively in Coleman Street and Fenchurch Street. He was among the first to undertake the distribution of tea and coffee in packet form, and conducted the business with the thoroughness which characterised all his undertakings. Two years after embarking on this scheme Cassell turned his thoughts to a plan for helping the temperance cause by means of cheap and enlightening publications for the people. With his wife's encouragement, and the substantial help which she was able to bring with her own inheritance, he started "The Teetotal Times" and "The Teetotal Essayist," when the fortunes of the movement were none too flourishing. On July 1, 1848, he launched the first number of a fully-equipped weekly journal, "The Standard of Freedom," published at fourpence halfpenny a copy. This was succeeded in 1850 by a penny weekly called "The Working Man's Friend and Family Instructor." John Cassell now had his own printing office, and from the first the new paper was his own production, with his address for the time being at No. 335 Strand. Then came in steady succession the popular serials and periodicals like "Cassell's Popular Educator," the "Magazine of Art," the "Illustrated Family Bible," the "Family Paper," the "History of England," the "Natural History," "Cassell's Magazine," the "Quiver," and illustrated editions of "Don Quixote"



## PIONEERS OF CHEAP LITERATURE

and other standard works in weekly parts—all helping to develop a healthy and popular taste in art and letters. Early in 1859 Cassell entered into partnership with the printers Petter and Galpin, who were associated with him in several of these enterprises, and helped him to build up the great printing and publishing house in La Belle Sauvage.

John Cassell, who died in 1865, ranks as a pioneer of cheap literature with Charles Knight\* and the brothers William and Robert Chambers, whose stories have been told in their own words. This reputation has been maintained by the house of Cassell since the founder's death, being strengthened considerably by the remarkable series known as "Cassell's National Library," which ran to 214 volumes at threepence each under Professor Henry Morley's editorship, from 1886 to 1890. In its own way there has been nothing to surpass that achievement in all the cheap reprints of later years.

The firm continued to be known as Cassell, Petter, Galpin and Co. until 1883, when it was formed into a limited company under the name by which it is now known all over the world—Cassell and Co.—with branches in New York, Toronto, Melbourne, and Paris.

\* Knight, who survived Cassell by eight years (dying in 1873), had a passion for cheapness which, unfortunately, was more profitable to the public than to the publisher, for in spite of all his enterprise he was never rich. His first business came to grief in the financial panic which ruined Scott and his publishers and spread destruction among many smaller houses, and his more interesting ventures after that event—such as the "Penny Encyclopædia"—were issued when he was acting as publisher to the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, organised by Brougham and others, a post which he held until the society came to grief in 1846 over the "Biographical Dictionary," winding up with a loss of nearly £5,000. Other works more closely identified with his own name were his "Popular History of England," his "Pictorial Shakespeare," his "London," and his "Shilling Volumes for All Readers"—running to nearly two hundred volumes in all and beginning with his own life of Caxton—which were not a financial success. Some of his more popular books were either written or edited by himself, the best known at the present day being, perhaps, his "Half-Hours with the Best Authors" and "Shadows of the Old Booksellers."



## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

Magazines and serials are still conspicuous features of the business, but the book department has for many years been equally important, and never on so large and comprehensive a scale as at the present day. It would fill more space than we could afford to name all the distinguished authors associated with the house, but mention must at least be made of its connexion with Robert Louis Stevenson. It shares with Longmans and Chatto and Windus the chief honours as Stevenson's publishers, but it was Cassell who introduced him to the novel-reading public by first issuing "Treasure Island" in book form, after it had run its serial course in "Young Folks." Stevenson's delight on receiving Cassell's offer is best described in his own way: "How much do you suppose?" he writes in one of his letters at the time, and then, after keeping back the answer in his teasing fashion, adds—"well, a hundred pounds, all alive O! A hundred jingling, tingling, golden, minted quid. Is not this wonderful?"

It was not mere chance that Cassell's also published the first book of Sir A. T. Quiller-Couch, for "Dead Man's Rock" was a legitimate offspring of "Treasure Island." "I began as a pupil and imitator of Stevenson," the author has himself admitted, "and was lucky in my choice of a master." Many other books both by "Q" and "R. L. S." came from the same publishers, who also issued Rider Haggard's "King Solomon's Mines" and some of the best tales of J. M. Barrie, Stanley Weyman, Max Pemberton, and other popular novelists too numerous to mention. Their art and technical books are known all over the globe, and their enviable record in other departments includes Dean Farrar's "Life of Christ," Sir Robert Ball's astronomical works, Traill's "Social England," Professor Henry Morley's "English Writers" and other works, and the popular nature books by the Kearton brothers. Mr. Arnold-Forster was a director of Cassell's before he became Secretary of State for War, and naturally published most

## WILLIAM HEINEMANN'S BEGINNINGS

of his books from *La Belle Sauvage*: so did the late Sir T. Wemyss Reid, when general manager of the firm. Sir Wemyss Reid's successor is Mr. Arthur Spurgeon, whose energetic rule has reorganised every branch of the business and brought back prosperity to a house which not many years ago seemed to have reached a point at which it could no longer make headway against the stress of modern competition.



THE OLD BELLE SAUVAGE INN  
NOW OCCUPIED BY THE HOUSE OF CASSELL AND CO.

### THE HOUSE OF HEINEMANN

Naturally there is not the same glamour attaching to the histories of our younger publishers as clings to the stories of such historic houses as, say, Longman's or Murray's; but, if the truth were told, there would be more than a touch of romance in the early records of some of them. The house of William Heinemann, for example, has sprung from two rooms on the second floor of its present building to a position which, in its twentieth year, finds its founder and head elected to the proud

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

position of President of the Publishers' Association. Mr. Heinemann himself, who was born at Surbiton forty-six years ago, learned his business under Nicholas Trübner, the scholarly publisher whose deep interest in Oriental studies, as well as in philosophy and religion, gave him a reputation which extended throughout the world. On the death of Trübner in 1884, Mr. Heinemann was largely responsible for the management of the business until he started for himself at No. 21 Bedford Street, a building then occupied on the ground floor by an enterprising tailor, and on the first floor—now Mr. Heinemann's private office—by the Camera Club. Mr. Heinemann, as already stated, began modestly enough with two rooms on the second floor, and it was here, on February 1, 1890, that he launched his first venture—Mr. Hall Caine's "Bondman," which not only gave the new publisher an excellent send-off, but once and for all established the novelist's claim to an immense popularity. "How splendidly he has done it!" wrote the late T. E. Brown, the Manx poet, in thanking Mr. Hall Caine for the copy of the book which Mr. Heinemann had sent him; and the connexion then formed between author and publisher has remained unbroken down to the present day.

Few publishers have been more fortunate in their early speculations than was Mr. Heinemann in 1890. A few months after the appearance of "The Bondman" he published Mr. Whistler's scathing philippic on "The Gentle Art of Making Enemies"—a work which had an immediate and remarkable sale, and is still, we understand, in constant demand. Not long afterwards the publisher scored another sensational success in the "Twenty-five Years of Secret Service" of "Major Le Caron," the Government spy, who disclosed the inmost secrets of the Fenians in America, and played a leading part in the proceedings of the Parnell Commission. The book ran through many editions, and led to a most formidable list of threatened libel



MR. WILLIAM HEINEMANN  
*Photographed by Hana, Bedford Street*





## A COSMOPOLITAN PUBLISHER

actions, mainly from Irish members of Parliament, but nothing ever came of them. These and other successes placed the new publishing house on a thoroughly sound footing. With expanding business Mr. Heinemann was joined by Mr. Sydney S. Pawling, who has remained an active and, in Mr. Heinemann's own words, "a most excellent partner" ever since. The Camera Club retired from the first floor; the tailor was induced to give up his shop, and the whole building was adapted to the growing needs of the firm. The business naturally brought Mr. Heinemann in close personal touch with a host of distinguished men and women. Robert Louis Stevenson, whose last two books he published—as well as the volume of plays which he wrote with W. E. Henley—he knew but slightly, but Ibsen, whose plays he has helped so much to introduce to English readers—through the translations of Dr. Edmund Gosse and Mr. William Archer—he knew quite well. To-day, we are assured by Mr. Heinemann, Ibsen's plays sell in this country better than they have ever done.

Mr. Heinemann's literary interests are nothing if not cosmopolitan. Always quick to recognise a new literary movement in any part of the world, he has been the means of making Englishmen familiar with the works of many Continental scholars and novelists. Turgenev, Tolstoy, Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson, George Brandes, Hauptmann, D'Annunzio, are but a few of the European names which figure prominently in his list, and his English editions of such monumental works as Ferrero's "Greatness and Decline of Rome," which was only completed a few months ago, and Herr von Ruville's life of "William Pitt, Earl of Chatham," in three great volumes, are splendid proofs of his public-spirited enterprise. Perhaps we may mention that Mr. Heinemann's interest in the drama has developed into play-writing on his own account, for he now has at least three plays to his credit—"The First Step" (1895), "Summer Moths" (1898), and "War" (1901).

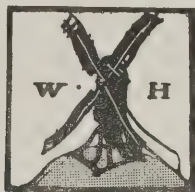
## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

The drama, however, does not play a greater part in Mr. Heinemann's business than art, literature, fiction, or travel, in each of which he has produced some of the most notable books of recent years. In art—to refer only to his later productions in this department—he was the first to exploit the fanciful genius of Mr. Arthur Rackham, with the “Rip Van Winkle” pictures, which has been followed by a companion edition of Mr. Courtney's adaptation of De la Motte Fouqué's “Undine”; and, apart from many of the more expensive art works bearing his imprint, he has lately embarked on a new series of handbooks, based on Dr. Salomon Reinach's “Apollo,” which, when complete, will form a history of art from the earliest times to the present day. In letters the publisher hopes shortly to complete—with Mr. Dimsdale's “History of Latin Literature”—the fine series of books on “The Literatures of the World,” prepared under the able editorship of Dr. Edmund Gosse, who has issued his own books from the same press, and has for many years been closely associated with Mr. Heinemann in other literary undertakings.

In travel the house of Heinemann has been specially identified of late years with Arctic and Antarctic exploration. In the spring of 1909 the publisher issued Ejnar Mikkelsen's “Conquering the Arctic Ice,” in which the author acknowledged his indebtedness to Mr. Heinemann for advancing the sum on account which had enabled him to complete the preliminary plan for his expedition. It is satisfactory to learn that the book sold sufficiently well to prevent such public-spirited policy from involving the publisher in any pecuniary loss. We have since been furnished with even more striking evidence of this enterprise in the magnificent production of Lieutenant Shackleton's “Heart of the Antarctic.” Fiction has been a strong feature with Mr. Heinemann from the first, and always with a certain distinctive note of its own. Apart from his unbroken association with Mr. Hall Caine, he has published most of Mr. E. F.

## SOME HEINEMANN AUTHORS

Benson's novels, as well as many of the works of Mr. Robert Hichens, Madame Sarah Grand, Sir Gilbert Parker, Mr. Henry James, Mr. Israel Zangwill, Miss Elizabeth Robins, Mrs. F. A. Steel, Mrs. Dudeney, and a host of other well-known novelists. His greatest acquisition of late years has been Mr. William de Morgan, who has published all his books with Mr. Heinemann. Both Mr. Heinemann and Mr. Pawling have long played a conspicuous part in safeguarding the best interests of the book world, and Mr. Heinemann's election as President of the Publishers' Association in 1909 was a well-earned tribute to his eminent services on behalf of the "Great Trade" as a whole.



MR. HEINEMANN'S  
DEVICE

# APPENDIX I : THE ORIGINAL CHARTER OF THE STATIONERS' COMPANY, GRANTED BY PHILIP AND MARY, 1557 \*

**T**HE king and queen to all to whom etc. greeting.  
Know ye that we, considering and manifestly  
perceiving that certain seditious and heretical  
books rhymes and treatises are daily published and printed  
by divers scandalous malicious schismatical and heretical  
persons, not only moving our subjects and lieges to  
sedition and disobedience against us, our crown and dig-  
nity, but also to renew and move very great and de-  
testable heresies against the faith and sound catholic  
doctrine of Holy Mother Church, and wishing to provide  
a suitable remedy in this behalf, of our special grace and  
from our certain knowledge and mere motion we will, give  
and grant for ourselves, the heirs and successors of us the  
foresaid Queen, to our beloved and faithful lieges Thomas  
Dockwraye, John Cawood, Henry Coke, William Bon-  
ham, Richard Waye, Simon Coston, Reginald Wolf,  
James Hollyland, Stephen Kevall, John Turke, Nicholas  
Taverner, Michael Loble, John Jakes, William Ryddall,  
John Judson, John Walley, Thomas Duxwell, Anthony  
Smyth, William Powell, Richard Jugge, William Serryes,  
Robert Holder, Thomas Purfot, John Rogers, William  
Steward, Richard Patchet, Nicholas Borman, Roger Ire-  
land, Richard Crosse, Thomas Powell, Anthony Crofte,  
Richard Hyll, Alan Gamlyn, Henry Norton, Richard Lant,  
Henry Suttell, Andrew Hertes, Thomas Devell, John  
Case, William Hyll, Richard Richardson, Giles Huke,  
John Kynge, John Fairebarne, John Hyll, Peter Frenche,  
Richard Harryson, Humphrey Powell, John Clerke,  
William Copland, William Marten, Edward Sutton,  
Thomas Parker, John Bonham, John Goughe, John Daye,  
John Whitney, Simon Spylman, William Baldwyn,

\* English translation as printed in Arber's "Transcript of the Stationers' Registers," vol. i.

## “OUR BELOVED AND FAITHFUL LIEGES”

William Coke, John Kevall, Robert Broke, Thomas Sawyer, Charles Walley, Thomas Patenson, Thomas Mershe, Richard Tottell, Ralph Tyer, John Burtofte, William Griffith, Edwarde Broune, Nicholas Cliston, Richard Harvy, James Gunwell, Edward Cator, John Kele, Thomas Bylton, Thomas Mascall, William Norton, William Pykeryng, Richard Baldwyn, Richard Grene, Thomas Boyden, Robert Badborne, John Alday, Robert Blyth, Gregory Brodehead, Hugh Cotisfurth, Richard Wallys, Thomas Gee, Richard Kevell the younger, John Shereman, Thomas Skeroll, Owen ap Roger, John Tysdale, Adam Croke, and John Fox, free men of the mistery or art of Stationery of our City of London, and the suburbs of the same, that they from hence forth may be in fact, deed and name one body by themselves for ever, and one perpetual community incorporated of one Master and two Keepers or Wardens in the community of the same Mistery or Art of Stationery of the foresaid City, and that they may have perpetual succession.

And further we of our special grace and from our certain knowledge and mere motion, by these presents ordain, create, erect, make and appoint the foresaid Thomas Dockwraye Master of the same Mistery or Art of Stationery of the foresaid City during one year next following, and the foresaid John Cawood and Henry Cooke Keepers or Wardens of the same mistery or art of Stationery of the foresaid city for one year next following; and the foresaid William Bonham, Richard Waye, Simon Coston, Reginald Wolfe, James Hollyland, Stephen Kevall, John Turke, Nicholas Taverner, Michael Lobley, John Jacques, William Ryddall, John Judson, John Walley, Thomas Duxwell, Anthony Smyth, William Powell, Richard Jugge, William Seres, Robert Holder, Thomas Porfutt, John Rogers, William Steward, Richard Patchett, Nicholas Borman, Roger Ireland, Richard Crosse, Thomas Powell, Anthony Crofte, Richard Hyll, Alan Gamlyn, Henry Norton, Richard Lant, Henry Suttell, Andrew Hester, Thomas Devell, John Case,



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William Hyll, Richard Richardson, Giles Huke, John Kyng, John Fayerbarne, John Hyll, Peter Frenche, Richard Harryson, Humphrey Powell, John Clerke, William Copland, William Marten, Edward Sutton, Thomas Parker, John Bonham, John Gough, John Daye, John Whitney, Simon Spilman, William Baldwyn, and William Coke, John Kevall, Robert Broke, Thomas Sawyer, Charles Walley, Thomas Patenson, Thomas Marshe, Richard Tottell, Ralph Tyer, John Burtofte, William Griffith, Edward Broune, Nicholas Clyston, Richard Harvy, James Gonwell, Edward Cator, John Kele, Thomas Bylton, Thomas Maskall, William Norton, William Pykeryng, Richard Baldwyn, Richard Grene, Thomas Boyden, Robert Radborne, John Alday, Robert Blyth, Gregory Brodehead, Hugh Cotisfourth, Richard Walleys, Thomas Gee, Richard Kevell, John Shereman, Thomas Skeroll, Owen ap Roger, John Tysdale, Adam Broke, and John Foxe, we make, create, and appoint by these presents the community of the same mistery or art of Stationery of the foresaid City.

And further we ordain, create, erect, make and appoint by these presents the foresaid Master Wardens and community in deed and in name one body by themselves for ever, and one community for ever incorporated of one Master and two Keepers or Wardens and the community of the same mistery or art of Stationery of the foresaid city of London, and we incorporate the Master, Keepers or Wardens and community, and we will, grant, create, erect, ordain, make, declare and appoint them by these presents to be a corporate body by the name of "The Master and Keepers or Wardens and Community of the mistery or art of Stationery of the City of London," for ever to endure really and in full; and that the same Masters, Keepers or Wardens and community may have for the future perpetual succession; and that the Master and Keepers or Wardens and community and their successors shall be for ever entitled, named, and called by the name of "The Masters and

## RULES AND REGULATIONS

Keepers or Wardens and Community of the Mistery or Art of Stationery of the City of London ” and by that name shall have power to plead and be impleaded and answer and be answered in all and several matters, suits and complaints, actions, demands and causes before any judges and justices, and in any courts and places ; and they shall have a common seal to serve and make use of for their matters and business, and for the sealing of all and several their deeds and writings in any wise touching or concerning their affairs and business ; and the Masters and Keepers or Wardens and community and their successors from time to time may make and ordain and establish, for the good and sound rule and government of the free men of the art or mistery aforesaid and of the foresaid community, ordinances, provisions and statutes whenever it shall seem to them to be opportune and fit, so as those ordinances, provisions and statutes are not in any way repugnant or contrary to the laws or statutes of this our kingdom of England, or to the prejudice of the common wealth of the same, our kingdom ; and that they and their successors for ever shall have power to form lawful and honourable assemblies of themselves for statutes and ordinances of this kind and other things for the good of this mistery or art and of the same community, and for other lawful causes, in the foresaid form, whenever it shall please them, freely and with impunity, without molestation or disturbance of us or the heirs or successors of us the foresaid Queen, or of any other ; and that the foresaid Master and Keepers or Wardens and Community of the said mistery or art of Stationery of the foresaid city and their successors or the greater part of them assembled lawfully and in a fitting place yearly for ever, or oftener or more seldom, at such times and places within the foresaid city as they shall please, may elect and make of themselves one Master and two Keepers or Wardens of the same mistery or art of Stationery of the foresaid City to rule, govern, and oversee the mistery and community aforesaid and all the men of the same

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

mistry and the business of the same, and to remove and put out of their offices their former Master and their former Keepers or Wardens as it seems best to them ; and that if and whenever it shall happen in any election that the Master and Keepers or Wardens and community aforesaid are equal in one vote one part against another, in such election that then and so often the Master of the foresaid mistry, if there is any Master at that time, or the elder Keeper or Warden of that mistry if there is no master of that mistry at that time, shall have two votes in such elections ; and that the Masters and Keepers or Wardens and the community of the foresaid mistry and their successors for the time being for ever shall be persons, able and capable in law to give, grant, and let their lands and tenements, goods and chattels, and to acquire, possess, take and receive for themselves and their successors, lands, tenements, possessions, goods, chattels and hereditaments to have, enjoy, and possess for themselves and their successors for ever, notwithstanding the statute passed concerning lands and tenements not to be put in mortmain, or any statute, act or ordinance made, or to be made to the contrary, so that the said lands, tenements and hereditaments thus by them acquired and received are within our said City of London or the suburbs or liberties of the same city, and so that they do not exceed in any wise the yearly value of twenty pounds of lawful money of England.

Besides we will, grant, ordain, and appoint for ourselves and the successors of us the foresaid Queen that no person within this our realm of England or the dominions of the same shall practise or exercise by himself or by his ministers, his servants or by any other person the art or mistry of printing any book or any thing for sale or traffic within this our realm of England or the dominions of the same, unless the same person at the time of his foresaid printing is or shall be one of the community of the foresaid mistry or art of Stationery of the foresaid City, or has therefore licence of us, or the heirs or suc-

## PAINS AND PENALTIES

cessors of us the foresaid Queen by the letters patent of us or the heirs or successors of us the foresaid Queen.

Further we will, grant, ordain, and appoint for ourselves, the heirs and successors of us the foresaid Queen to the foresaid Master, Keepers or Wardens and community of the mystery or art of Stationery of the City of London aforesaid and their successors for ever, that it shall be lawful for the Master and Keepers or Wardens aforesaid and their successors for the time being to make search whenever it shall please them in any place, shop, house, chamber, or building of any printer, binder or bookseller whatever within our kingdom of England or the dominions of the same of or for any books or things printed, or to be printed, and to seize, take, hold, burn, or turn to the proper use of the foresaid community, all and several those books and things which are or shall be printed contrary to the form of any statute, act, or proclamation, made or to be made ; and that if any person shall practise or exercise the foresaid art or mystery contrary to the foresaid form, or shall disturb, refuse, or hinder the foresaid Master or Keepers or Wardens for the time being or any one of them for the time being, in making the foresaid search or in seizing, taking, or burning the foresaid books or things, or any of them printed or to be printed contrary to the form of any statute, act, or proclamation, that then the foresaid Master and Keepers or Wardens for the time being shall imprison or commit to jail any such person so practising or exercising the foresaid art or mystery contrary to the foresaid form, or as is stated above, disturbing, refusing or hindering, there to remain without bail for the space of three months ; and that the same person so practising or exercising the foresaid art or mystery contrary to the foresaid form, or so, as is above stated, disturbing, refusing or hindering, shall forfeit for each such practising or exercising aforesaid against the form aforesaid and for each such disturbance, refusal or hindrance a hundred shillings of lawful money of England, one half thereof to us, the heirs and successors of us

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

the foresaid Queen, and the other half thereof to the foresaid Master, Keepers or Wardens and community.

Notwithstanding that express mention of the true yearly value, or of the certainty of the premises, or of any of them, or of other gifts or grants made by us or by any of our progenitors to the foresaid Master and Keepers or Wardens and community before these times, is not made in these presents, or any statute, act, ordinance, provision or restriction to the contrary hereof previously made, published, ordained or provided, or any other thing, cause, or matter whatever in any wise.

In witness of which thing we have caused to be made these our letters patent.

Witnesses—the King and Queen at Westminster the fourth day of May.

By writ of privy seal, etc.



## APPENDIX II : BIBLIOGRAPHY OF PUBLISHING AND BOOKSELLING. BY WILLIAM HY. PEET

[Reprinted (with additions) from NOTES AND QUERIES by kind permission of the Editor.]

### A BALLADE OF BYGONE BOOKSHOPS

CURLL, by the *Fleet-Ditch* nymphs caress'd ;

TONSON the Great, the Slow-to-pay ;

LINTOT, of Folios rubric-press'd ;

OSBORNE, that stood in JOHNSON's way ;

DODSLEY, who sold the "Odes" of Gray ;

DAVIES, that lives in CHURCHILL's rhyme ;

MILLAR and KNAPTON,—where are they ?

Where are the bookshops of old time ?

AUSTIN DOBSON, *art.* "*The Two Paynes*," in "*Eighteenth Century Vignettes*," *Second Series*.

IN the following contribution to the Bibliography of Publishing and Bookselling, mainly referring to Great Britain and the United States of America, it has been my intention to enumerate those books, &c., that deal solely or mainly with these subjects, and not to include works on literary history or memoirs. The three principal exceptions are also the three greatest works of their kind in the language—Boswell's "Johnson," Lockhart's "Scott," and Trevelyan's "Macaulay." In each of these such a considerable space is occupied by the transactions with, or relations between, authors and publishers, that they may fairly claim a place in any list of books dealing with the history of what Talfourd calls "the Great Trade." There is, however, hardly any work of literary biography, from Gibbon's "Autobiography" to "The Life of Mrs. Oliphant," that will not yield material bearing on the subject of publishers and publishing.

The largest collection of books devoted to the subjects of book-producing and bookselling in all its many branches will be found in the library of the Börsenverein der Deutschen Buchhändler at Leipzig. The catalogue of this library is in 2 vols. (Vol. I., 1885 ; Vol. II., 1902),

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

and contains several thousands of titles of works in all languages. I am considerably indebted to this catalogue, although I had nearly finished my list before I had the opportunity of consulting it. Works on printing and the production of books are only noted when they contain matter bearing incidentally on publishing or bookselling, while copyright, book-collecting, and the sport of book-hunting are beyond my scope. Works dealing with the freedom of the Press, actions for libel, or prosecutions for publishing blasphemous or seditious books are not systematically included. They form, however, a very large section in the Leipzig catalogue.

A "Bibliography of Journalism and its History," by Mr. D. Williams, will be found in Mitchell's "Press Directory" for 1903. The "D.N.B." is cited, as it contains much material, with references to authorities, under the names of booksellers and publishers who are not the subject of separate volumes. A list of these names may perhaps one day be compiled. With three exceptions other biographical dictionaries are not noted.

ACKERMANN, EDWARD.—A Bookseller by Choice. (*The Bookseller and Newsmen.*) September, 1899, New York.

ALDINE MAGAZINE, THE.—1838.

*William West (q.v.) contributed a series of valuable articles on old booksellers.*

ALDIS, H. G.—The Book-Trade, 1557-1625. (Reprinted from "The Cambridge History of English Literature," vol. iv, pp. 378-420.) Reprinted for Private Circulation, 8vo, London, 1909.

*Pp. 415-20 are devoted to a bibliography of the subject during the period specified.*

A List of Books printed in Scotland before 1700, including those printed furth of the Realm for Scottish Booksellers. With Brief Notes on the Printers and Stationers. Edinburgh Bibliographical Society, 1905.

ALLEN, C. E.—Publishers' Accounts, including a Consideration of Copyright. 8vo, London, 1897.

ALMON, JOHN, 1737-1805.—Memoirs of John Almon, Bookseller, of Piccadilly. 8vo, London, 1790.

*Famous as John Wilkes's publisher, and as having been prosecuted for selling Junius' Letters.*

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AMES, JOSEPH, 1689-1758.—*Typographical Antiquities, being an Historical Account of Printing in England, Memoirs of the Ancient Printers, and a Register of Books printed by them from 1471 to 1600.* 4to, London, 1749.

*For various editions see Lowndes.*

AMORY, THOMAS, 1691 ?-1788.—*Life of John Bunce, Esq., 1756-66, and subsequent reprints.*

*Amory was a bookseller in London and Dublin. "John Bunce" contains fragments of autobiography, a character of Edmund Curll, &c.*

ANDREWS, WILLIAM LORING.—*The Old Booksellers of New York (John Bradburn, Joseph Sabin, William Gowans).* New York, 1895.

*See the "Publishers' Weekly" (New York), vol. xlix, no. 16; vol. xlviii, no. 20; vol. xlvii, no. 15*

ANNUALS.

*See "The Annals of Former Days" in the "Bookseller," 29 November and 24 December, 1858.*

*See also "Publishers' Circular," June 27, 1891.*

APPLETON'S Cyclopædia of American Biography. 6 vols., New York 1887-9.

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*This was only a trial proof of 32 pp. in vol. v of Professor Arber's "Transcript of the Registers of the Stationers' Company."*

*And see "Catalogues" and "Stationers' Company."*

ARCHÆOLOGIA, vol. xxix, p. 101.—*Copies of Original Papers illustrative of the Management of Literature by Printers and Stationers in the Middle of the Reign of Queen Elizabeth. Communicated by (Sir) Henry Ellis.* 4to, London, 1834.

ATHENÆUM, THE.—*Published weekly since 1828.*

*See throughout for obituary notices, &c.*

AUTHOR, THE.—*Published monthly since 1890.*

AUTHORS' AND BOOKSELLERS' CO-OPERATIVE PUBLISHING ALLIANCE.—*A New Departure in Publishing.* 8vo, London, 1901.

AUTHORS AND PUBLISHERS.—*A Description of Publishing Methods and Arrangements.* Fourth Edition. New York, 1855.

AUTHORS' PUBLICATION SOCIETY.—*Reasons for Establishing one, by which Literary labour would receive a more adequate Reward, and the Price of all New Books be much reduced.* 8vo, London, 1843.

AUTHOR'S, THE, HAND-BOOK.—*A Guide to the Art and System of Publishing on Commission.* 8vo, London, 1844.

AUTHOR'S, THE, PRINTING AND PUBLISHING ASSISTANT.—*A Guide to the Printing, Correcting, and Publishing New Works.* Crown 8vo, London, 1845

## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

BAGSTER, HOUSE OF.—A Century of Publishing : a Chat with Mr. Robert Bagster. With Illustrations and 3 Portraits.—*St. James's Budget*, 27 April, 1894.

Centenary of the Bagster Publishing House, established 19 April, 1794. Crown 8vo, London, 1894.

BALLANTYNE, HOUSE OF

*See Lockhart's "Scott," passim.*

A Refutation of the Misstatements and Calumnies contained in Mr. Lockhart's Life of Sir Walter Scott respecting the Messrs. (James and John) Ballantyne. By the Trustees and Son of the late James Ballantyne. 8vo, London, 1838.

The Ballantyne Humbug Handled. By John Gibson Lockhart. 8vo, Edinburgh, 1839.

Reply to Mr. Lockhart's Pamphlet entitled "The Ballantyne Humbug Handled." By the Authors of "A Refutation of the Misstatements and Calumnies," &c. 8vo, London, 1839

"Mr. J. H. Rutherford, bookseller of Kelso, who died in November 1903, aged eighty-four, made a special study of the Lockhart-Ballantyne controversy. I have often wished that he had published his conclusions."—"Rambling Remarks," by Sir W. Robertson Nicoll, "*British Weekly*," 5 November, 1903. And see s.n. Fearman (W.).

History of the Ballantyne Press. 4to, Edinburgh, 1871.

The Ballantyne Press and its Founders, 1796-1908. By W. T. Dobson and W. L. Carrie. Post 4to, Edinburgh, 1909.

BEEMAN, NEVILLE.—Bookselling : A Decaying Industry.—*New Century Review*, January, 1898.

BENTLEY, HOUSE OF.—Some Leaves from the Past. Swept together by R. B. With 11 Portraits and other Illustrations. 8vo, privately printed, 1896.

*With references to original authorities.*

Richard Bentley and Son. By Ernest Chesneau. Reprinted from *Le Livre* of October, 1885. With some additional Notes. With 3 Illustrations. Privately printed, royal 8vo, 1886.

Richard Bentley, 1794-1871.—*The Bookseller* (p. 811), 1871.

BENT'S LITERARY ADVERTISER, 1802-60.

*See throughout for obituary notices, &c.*

BERJEAU, JEAN PHILIBERT.—The Book-worm : a Literary and Bibliographical Review. 5 vols., London, 1866-71.

BESANT, SIR WALTER.—The Pen and the Book. 8vo, London, 1899.

Literary Handmaid of the Church (the S.P.C.K.). Crown 8vo, London, 1890.

*And see the volumes of the "Author," 1890, &c.*

BIBLIOGRAPHER, THE.—A Journal of Book-lore. Edited by Henry B Wheatley. 5 vols., London, 1882-4.

*See Indexes throughout.*

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Two References to the English Book-trade, *circa* 1525. Vol. i, p. 252.

The Booksellers at the Sign of the Trinity. By E. Gordon Duff. Vol. i, pp. 93 and 175.

English Book-sales, 1676-1680. By A. W. Pollard. Vol. i, p. 373.

The Long Shop in the Poultry. By H. J. Plomer. Vol. ii, p. 61.

The Early Italian Book-trade. By R. Garnett. Vol. iii, p. 29.

**BIBLIOPHOBIA.**—Remarks on the Present Languid and Depressed State of Literature and the Book-trade. In a letter addressed to the author of the "Bibliomania." By Mercurius Rusticus. With Notes by Cato Parvus. London, 1832.

**BIBLIOTHEK DES BÖRSENVEREINS DER DEUTSCHEN BUCHHÄNDLER, KATALOG DER.** Leipzig, 1885.

Supplement, 1885-1901. Leipzig, 1902.

*Further Supplements are issued periodically.*

*This library contains the most complete collection in the world of books in all languages dealing with the production and sale of books and cognate subjects.*

(BIGG, JAMES.)—The Bookselling System: a letter to Lord Campbell respecting the late inquiry into the regulations of the Booksellers' Association in reference to the causes which led to its dissolution . . . and the consequences to authors likely to result from unrestricted competition in the sale of new works. By a Retired Bookseller. Westminster, 1852.

**BINGLEY, WILLIAM, 1738-1799.**—A Sketch of W. Bingley, Bookseller. With Portrait and a Prospectus of his Proposed Reprint of Nos. 1-46 of the *North Briton*. London, 1793.

The New Plain Dealer; or, Will Freeman's Budget, 1791-94.

*Contains autobiographical details.*

**BLACK, ADAM, 1784-1874.**—Memoirs of Adam Black. Edited by Alexander Nicolson, LL.D. With Portrait. Second Edition. Crown 8vo, Edinburgh, 1885.

**BLACKIE, HOUSE OF.**—Origin and Progress of the Firm of Blackie and Son, 1809-1874. 8vo, London, 1897.

**BLACKWOOD, HOUSE OF.**—Annals of a Publishing House: William Blackwood and his Sons, their Magazine and Friends. By Mrs. Oliphant. With 4 Portraits. Vols. i and ii. 8vo, Edinburgh, 1897.

Vol. iii, John Blackwood. By his Daughter, Mrs. Gerald Porter. With 2 Portraits. 8vo, Edinburgh, 1898.

The Early House of Blackwood. By I. C. B. Printed for private circulation. Post 4to, Edinburgh, 1900.

*This was intended to supply a deficiency in Mrs. Oliphant's history of the firm.*



## THE ROMANCE OF BOOKSELLING

### BLACKWOOD, HOUSE OF—*continued*

The *Bookseller*, 26 June, 27 August, 26 September, 1860.

The *Critic*, 7 July, 1860, and five successive weeks—a series of articles by F. Espinasse.

The *Bookman*, special article, with portraits, &c. November, 1901.

*Blackwood's Magazine*.—A Letter to Mr. John Murray, occasioned by his having undertaken the publication in London of *Blackwood's Magazine*, 1818.

Correspondence on the Subject of *Blackwood's Magazine*. ? 1818.

A Selection from the Obituary Notices of the late John Blackwood, Editor of *Blackwood's Magazine*. Privately printed. Small 4to, Edinburgh, 1880.

BOHN, HENRY GEORGE, 1796–1884.—*Times*, 25 August, 1884; *Athenæum*, 30 August, 1884; *Bookseller*, September 1884; *Bibliographer*, October 1884; *Book Monthly* (with portrait), April 1904.

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See the "*Bookseller*," 8 April, 1902; and Lawler's "*Book Auctions*," forward; also s.n. Hodgson.

BOOK AUCTIONS IN ENGLAND.—See *Notes and Queries*, 2 S. xi, 463; 5 S. xii, 95, 211, 411; 6 S. ii, 297, 417; 9 S. vi, 86, 156; 10 S. viii, 246, 266.

*Longman's Magazine*, April 1893.—Article by A. W. Pollard, "The First English Book-Sale."

BOOK, THE, OF ENGLISH TRADES.—The Bookbinder, the Bookseller, the Printer, &c. New Edition, with 500 Questions for Students. 12mo, London, 1824.

BOOKKEEPING, A MANUAL OF.—For Booksellers, Publishers, and Stationers on the principle of Single, converted periodically into Double Entry. By a Bookseller. 8vo, London, 1850.

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See *Indexes throughout*.

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- Hampshire. See IO S. v, 481; vi, 31.
- St. Neots. See IO S. xii, 164.
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*And see Marston's (E.) "Sketches of Some Booksellers of the Time of Dr. Johnson," fcap. 8vo, 1902, chap. vii, for an account by Mr. Bowes of a Booksellers' Club, 1805-11, "The Friends of Literature."*

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*The eleven copies were claimed by the following libraries: British Museum; Zion College; The Universities of Oxford, Cambridge, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Glasgow, Perth; The Advocates' Library, Edinburgh; Trinity College, Dublin; King's Inn, Dublin. See "Quarterly Review," No. 41, May 1819, on the subject of the compulsory eleven copies, with list of pamphlets, &c.*

*It may be here noted that John Wilkes, in a speech in the House of Commons on April 28, 1777, said: "I wish, sir, a sum was allowed by Parliament for the purchase of the most valuable edition of the best authors, and an Act passed to oblige every printer, under a certain penalty, to send a copy, bound, of every publication he made to the British Museum."*

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The First Part of the Catalogue of English Printed Books, which concerneth such matters of divinitie as have bin either written in our owne tongue, or translated out of anie other language; and have bin published to the glory of God, and edification of the Church of Christ in England. Gathered into alphabet, and such method as it is, by Andrew Maunsell, Bookseller. London, printed by John Windet for Andrew Maunsell, dwelling in Lothburie, 1595.

A Catalogue of the most vendible Books in England, orderly and alphabetically Digested; under the Heads of Divinity, History, Physick, and Chyrurgery, Law, Arithmetick, Geometry, Astrologie, Dialling . . . &c. With Hebrew, Greek, and Latin Books, for Schools and Scholars. The like Work never yet performed by any. (By William London.) London, 1658.

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*The systematic enumeration of catalogues is rendered superfluous by the publication of Mr. Growoll's "Three Centuries of English Book-trade Bibliography," 1903. See forward; also an article by Mr. E. Marston in the "Publishers' Circular," March 16, 1907.*

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*The original compiler of some of these Term Catalogues was probably R. Clavell. See Mr. Marston's article above.*

A collection of Trade Catalogues referring to sales of books and copyrights, ranging from 1704 to 1768, giving details of prices and purchasers, is in the possession of Messrs. Longmans and Co. An account of these by me will be found in *Notes and Queries*, 7 S. ix, 301.



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*Cave's Life will be found in Johnson's "Lives of the English Poets and Sundry Eminent Persons," Tilt's edition, crown 8vo, London, 1831. See also Nichols's "Literary Anecdotes," vol. v.*

*Boswell says: "Cave was certainly a man of estimable qualities, and was eminently diligent and successful in his own business, which, doubtless, entitled him to respect. But he was peculiarly fortunate in being recorded by Johnson, who of the narrow life of a printer and publisher, without any digressions or adventitious circumstances, has made an interesting and agreeable narrative."*

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Life and Typography of William Caxton. By William Blades. London, 1861-3.

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*No mention is made in this book of the fact that Robert Chambers was the author of "The Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation" (1844), and William Chambers wished the secret to die with him. An account of the authorship and publication will, however, be found in Mr. Alexander Ireland's Introduction to the twelfth edition, 1884.*

*See James Payn's "Some Literary Recollections," 1886, for a chapter on the two brothers. Payn never concealed his dislike of William Chambers, and it is understood that the Sir Peter Fibbert of "For Cash Only" is to some extent a portrait of him.*

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COLE, JOHN.—Bookselling Spiritualised, Books and Articles of Stationery rendered Monitors of Religion (only 40 copies printed). Scarborough, 1826.

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The Great Booksellers of the World. By Max Maury. Bernard Quaritch, of London; Ludwig Rosenthal, of Munich; Damascène Morgand of Paris; Henry Sotheran, of London; E. Bonaventure of New York. With 2 Portraits.

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*This edition contains much interesting matter by Curll respecting his connection with Pope and other eminent persons. See "Notes and Queries," 6 S. xi, 381-2, for Curll's Bibliography, by W. Roberts.*

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*Many of Dunton's letters and agreements are in the Bodleian Library, Rawlinson MSS. (See Nichols's edition of "Life and Errors," Appendix.)*

*Dunton is notable as one of the first men that the Pretender purposed to hang at Tyburn if ever he ascended the British throne, "for having writ forty books to prove him a Popish impostor."*

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*And see Lowndes.*

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*Harper's Magazine*, vol. lxii, p. 391.

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*Mr. Fisher protested against the Act of Parliament which required eleven copies of all new books to be presented to Public Libraries. This was reduced to five copies by the Copyright Act of 1842. And see s.n. Britton, Brydges.*

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*Chap. xiii contains notes on various publishing houses, Trade Dinners, &c.*

FRANKLIN, BENJAMIN, 1706-90.—The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin. Edited (with a continuation) by Jared Sparks. Crown 8vo, London, 1850-4.

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*James Fraser was the proprietor and publisher of "Fraser's Magazine," but it was projected by a namesake, Hugh Fraser. See "The Maclise Portrait Gallery," edited by William Bates. New edition, p. 521. Crown 8vo, London, 1898; and also Froude's "Carlyle's Early Life," for an account of Fraser's first offer for and final acceptance of "Sartor Resartus," 1833.*

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FRY, JOHN, 1792-1822.—Bibliographical Memoranda in Illustration of Early English Literature. (Privately printed.) 4to, Bristol, 1816.  
*Contains articles on Osborne's Catalogues.*

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*He was an eccentric man, with a considerable knowledge of books, and a spirited engraver. He committed suicide, leaving behind him a letter to a friend ending: "I die in the principles I have published—a sound Whig." With the letter was enclosed the "Memoir of Himself," printed in the "Gentleman's Magazine," June 1814.*

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*Gent was author, printer, publisher, bookseller. For some further details see "Longman's Magazine," April 1896, "Thos. Gent, Printer," by Austin Dobson.*

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*Various letters from Daniel Stuart, of the "Morning Post," with reference to a dispute between the publishers and himself as to the high charges made for advertisements, and to the refusal of the publishers to be relegated to the back page of the paper. "To obtain the accommodation refused by the 'Morning Post' they set up a morning paper, the 'British Press'; and to oppose the 'Courier' an evening one, the 'Globe.'" These letters also contain very interesting details about Coleridge. His connection with the "Morning Post" was said "to have raised that paper from some small number to 7000 in one year."*

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*Copies of this circular letter, together with many original replies from authors,*

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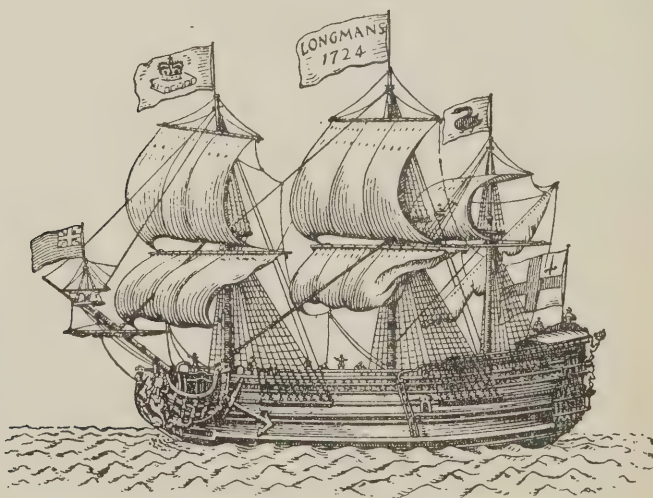
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### EPILOGUE

"If asked, Why Printers and Booksellers, in particular?—I answer, they are a valuable class of the community—the friendly assistants, at least, if not the patrons of literature—and I myself, one of the fraternity. Let the members of other professions, if they approve of the suggestion, in like manner record the meritorious actions of their brethren."—JOHN NICHOLS (*quoted from the title-page of Timperley's "Dictionary of Printers and Printing," 1839*).



### MESSRS. LONGMANS' DEVICE

INCLUDING THEIR OWN SIGNS OF THE SHIP AND THE SWAN,  
AND THAT OF THE BIBLE AND CROWN OF THE HOUSE OF  
RIVINGTON, WHICH THEY TOOK OVER IN 1890



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